

THE

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### HISTORICAL FACTS CONNECTED WITH PRIMITIVE PREACHING.

ABOUT twenty years ago, a venerable Christian gentleman, Wm. Bartlet, Esq. who is yet living, though he has attained fourscore years, endowed a Professorship of Sacred Rhetoric, in connection with the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts, U. S., to which he appointed his honoured friend, the Rev. Ebenezer Porter, D.D. In the discharge of the duties of that office the Doctor had to traverse a field of discussion that had not been reaped by any preceding instructor.

By these literary labours he collected materials for an interesting volume of *Lectures on Homilies and Preaching*, which was printed at the Andover press early in the present year. The venerable Professor having been for years in a valetudinarian state, was compelled, by growing infirmities, to resign his Bartlet professorship, and accept the honorary office of President to the Institution, to which no stipend is attached. His munificent patron, however, provided most liberally for his future support; but it pleased the Father of Spirits speedily to remove his servant, who could no longer labour in his vineyard, to his promised rest. This venerable man had scarcely seen the Lectures through the press, when he was called to his reward.

Dr. Porter died April 5th, 1834, lamented by a numerous circle, in the 62d year of his age.

As the volume before us is not reprinted in England, we have selected the following article, which contains the substance of two Lectures, and may gratify our readers with other extracts from the same work in future Numbers.

Editorial.

IN the early history of the world, we find no evidence that the business of public religious teaching was reduced to method. "Enoch the seventh from Adam," we are told in the epistle of Jude, "prophesied." The brief history of this patriarch as given by Moses, makes

no mention of him as a prophet. But the language ascribed to him by Jude, renders it plain that he spoke under a divine commission; and that as a public instructor of his cotemporaries, he taught the unity and moral perfections of God, and the difference, as to present

character, and final retribution, between saints and sinners.

Peter calls Noah "a preacher of righteousness;—the eighth person who was saved in the ark," as our translators understood the place; or as others, with less reason, render it, "the eighth preacher of righteousness."<sup>\*</sup>

In the patriarchal ages, the worship of God was confined chiefly to families, the head of each family acting as its priest. Moses, Aaron, and Joshua, in their day, often collected the people in solemn assembly, especially in the Tabernacle, and addressed them with powerful effect, in the name of the Lord.<sup>†</sup>

At a still later period, schools of the prophets were established at Bethel, Naiioth, and Jericho, which seem at first, to have been places of worship, where the people assembled, especially on the sabbaths and new moons, for purposes of religious devotion and instruction; and which afterwards became places of education for young men designated to the sacred office. In the reign of Asa, it is said, that Israel had long been "without the true God, and without a teaching priest." In the next reign, Jehoshaphat sent out a great number

of itinerant preachers, who "taught in Judah, and had the book of the law with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people." The peculiarity of garb, the sanctity of manners, the bold and often splendid imagery, and the violent action of these ancient preachers, need not here be described, being only circumstantial appendages of their sacred work.

After the captivity, when the inspired code assumed a more regular form, exhibiting the genealogies, the system of jurisprudence, and the sacred ritual of this peculiar people; and when their language was corrupted by a barbarous mixture of foreign dialects; religious teachers were obliged to become students, for the purposes of exposition and interpretation; and their employment, to some extent, became, of course, a learned profession. In the eighth chapter of Nehemiah, one very interesting example of Ezra's preaching is recorded. About fifty thousand people were assembled, in an open street. The learned scribe, with a large number of preachers on his right and left, stood on an elevated pulpit of wood. When he opened the book of the law, "all the people stood up," and continued standing, during the remainder of the service, which lasted from morning to mid-day. The preachers alternately "read in the book of the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading; and all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law."

It is foreign from my purpose here to enter into the controverted question about the origin of *synagogues*; except to say that I am satisfied with the arguments which assign their origin to the period after the captivity. The exercises

\* The same Apostle says that to those who in his day were "spirits in prison," Christ preached the Gospel by Noah, before the flood. And Paul, in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, alludes to the warning of the approaching deluge, which Noah gave his contemporaries, in which he acted under the spirit of prophecy.

† The tabernacle was a tent about fifty feet in length and seventeen in breadth. It was divided by a rich curtain into two parts, the *sanctum*, and *sanctum sanctorum*; the latter containing the Ark of the covenant, &c. In this tent, which was so constructed as to be taken down and moved, the Congregation of Israel offered sacrifices, and performed other religious services.

of the Jewish public worship, were prayers, reading the scriptures, exposition, and miscellaneous exhortation. The prayers, which, at first, were few and brief, had become in the time of our Saviour, so tedious as to be censured by him for their length. The reading of the Pentateuch, in such portions as to finish the whole, every year, was a long established custom, which Antiochus Epiphanes having forbidden by a sanguinary edict, equal portions of the prophets were substituted; and after the above prohibition was removed, the "law and the prophets" continued to be read, in alternate lessons. The passage which was read, was interpreted in Chaldee, after that became the current language of the Jews; and then the ruler of the synagogue invited persons of distinction, giving the preference to strangers, to address the people.

It would be rather amusing than useful to describe the sacred rites of Pagan nations. Egypt, Carthage, and Persia, had priests, who were second in rank and wealth, only to their kings. It was doubtless on account of the veneration in which they were held, as possessing superior learning, and as understanding the mysteries of the sacred books, and of divine worship, that Joseph exempted their lands from the assessment laid upon all the other subjects of Pharaoh. Among the sacred orders of those nations, the Magi of Persia were most distinguished; and the second Zoroaster might perhaps with propriety be called the first Mahomet. By his intercourse with the Jews in their captivity, he became acquainted with their scriptures, by the help of which he compiled his *Zendavesta*. In this he inserted many Psalms of David, — the history of Adam and Eve,

of the creation and deluge, of Moses, Abraham, and the patriarchs.

The official services of the priests among the Persians, consisted in giving instructions to the people, as to their duties to the gods, and in conducting their superstitious and sanguinary rites of sacrifice. These rites were performed in the open air: and Varro thinks that performing them in temples, as was afterwards done by the Greeks and Romans, had a great tendency to corrupt religion.

The public ministry of John the Baptist, of Christ and the apostles, is so minutely described in the New Testament, as to require no distinct notice in this sketch. The grand characteristics of their preaching, as to doctrine and manner, will be considered in another place. I will only say here, that our Saviour, as did his apostles after him, and as all missionaries must do, in spreading a new religion, taught his hearers wherever they happened to assemble; sometimes from the deck of a ship; at others, from the summit of a mountain; in a private house; in the synagogue; in the temple; just as the circumstances of the time made it convenient. The sermons delivered on these occasions exhibit a combination of simplicity and majesty, of superiority to the applause, and of fervent zeal for the salvation of men, which render them the best models of public instruction.

When they who planted the primitive churches ceased from their labours, the noble simplicity which distinguished their preaching, began to decline. Many of the early Christian Fathers, however, were burning and shining lights, who, by the purity of their doctrines, the fervour of their piety, the fidelity and efficacy of their ministrations, were great blessings to the world.

As the state of the pulpit during the few first centuries of the Christian church, is to be collected chiefly from sources difficult of access to most persons, it may be proper to class the remainder of my remarks under distinct heads, with some enlargement on each.

I begin with the names by which the preacher and his office were anciently designated. One of these titles was κηρυξ, a crier; borrowed from the business of one, who, as orator of heathen gods or princes, made proclamation in public places with a loud voice. Under this allusion, Paul calls himself κηρυξ καὶ ἀποστόλος, and Peter calls Noah δακτυλίστην κηρυξ. This title indeed, was often applied, in early times, to the *deacon*, who called to order at the commencement of public worship. The preacher was besides often called διδάσκαλος, *tractator, concionator, &c.*

The address which he delivered, was called by the Greeks ὁμιλία, that is, a familiar discourse, adapted to common people, from ὁμιλος, an assembly, a multitude. The Latins called it *tractatus, disputatio, locutio, sermo*, and *concio*, according to the subject and strain of the discourse. It is evident that *Laics*, as they were called, that is, men of distinguished attainments, who were certainly no more than *candidates* for ordination, did preach. Eusebius\* says that Origen preached in this manner at Cæsarea. And when Demetrius of Alexandria, objected to this as an innovation, the bishop of Jerusalem wrote him a letter, saying, "I know not how you came so evidently to misrepresent the truth." He adds that this was so far from being a new thing, that unordained brethren, who were found qualified, should

preach, that it had been done in many cases, some of which he repeats. This, however, was done only in case of such as were regularly called to it, by those who were themselves authorized preachers.

When the stated preacher was sick, it was customary for the deacons to read the homilies of the fathers. Indeed it is evident that Stephen and Philip, two of the seven deacons in the Apostolic church, were preachers;\* and from several passages in Paul's epistles,† as well as in the primitive fathers, it seems probable that the office of *deacon* was, in many cases, regarded as preparatory to the ministry, though it did not of itself imply authority to preach.

The duties of deaconesses in the early Christian church, like those of prophetesses in the Jewish, were limited to offices of piety and charity, and to the private instruction of their own sex. The public preaching of women, which was so strictly prohibited by Paul, was disallowed in all the orthodox churches of antiquity. Accordingly the council of Carthage adopted this as one of its canons; "Mulier, quamvis docta et sancta, viros in conventu, docere non præsumat."

#### GENERAL ORDER OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

*Place.*—To the Jews, Christ often preached in the synagogue, and so did the apostles. Among the early Christians religious assemblies often convened in the streets or fields; but more commonly in the houses of private persons, especially during seasons of persecution. In process of time, places of meeting were provided, which

\* Lib. VI. Cap. 19.

\* Acts vii. and viii. 5, 26.

† 1 Tim. iii. 13.



became common property, and took the name of *churches*,\* by a figure derived from the assemblies which convened in them. What sort of buildings these were, in the time of Diocletian, Eusebius informs us, in describing the wonderful prosperity of the church, which was suddenly dashed by the strife for pre-eminence among its ministers. "But now," says he, "how should any one be able to describe those multitudes, who, throughout every city, flocked to embrace the faith of Christ; and those famous assemblies in the churches? For which reason, they were no longer contented with the old edifices, but erected spacious churches from the very foundation, throughout all the cities."† And the churches erected by Constantine, "were richly adorned with pictures and images, and bore a striking resemblance to the pagan temples, both in their outward and inward form."

*Pulpit.*—The preacher addressed the people, in these ancient assemblies, sometimes from the episcopal seat, and sometimes, especially when baptism was to be administered, from the steps of the altar. The common place of the preacher, however, gave him a full view of his auditors, and to denote the dignity and authority of his office, was a sort of rostrum, called *tribunal*, *suggestum*, *ambo*, and other names corresponding with the different purposes, for which it was designed. A very usual appellation of this pulpit among the fathers was "the preacher's throne." Thus Gregory Nazianzen says, "I seemed to myself, to be placed on an elevated throne; upon lower seats on each side, sat presbyters; but the deacons in

white vestments, stood, spreading around them an angelic splendour." And Chrysostom calls the pulpit *Spovai didaschalikov*. The form of these pulpits was that of a rostrum, elevated, and somewhat extended; but they seem not to have been on the same model as those of many churches of modern Italy, where the whole person of the preacher is exposed to the view of his audience.

#### TIME OF PREACHING.

In populous cities, where assemblies could easily convene for devotional purposes, it was often customary to mingle preaching daily with public prayers. Origen and Augustine preached in this manner; and hence the frequent allusions of the latter to sermons, which he delivered "*heri*," and "*hesterno die*." These things were differently determined, according to circumstances, in different places. But the celebration of public worship on the *first day of the week*, was, in the primitive churches, a universal custom, founded on the example and express appointment of the Apostles.

The number of services on the Lord's day was one, two, or three, according to the disposition of the preacher, or the zeal or convenience of the hearers. Basil commonly preached twice on the Christian sabbath. Augustine in the afternoon, often alludes to his morning discourse. Chrysostom styles one of his homilies, "an exhortation to those who were ashamed to come to sermon, after dinner." In his tenth homily to the people of Antioch, he commends them for the full assemblies which convened for public worship in the afternoon. It is probable, that he did, at least occasionally, preach a *third time* on the same sabbath; for he certainly

\* *Εκκλησία*.

† Euseb. Lib. 8. Cap. 1.—and Mosheim, i. 385.

did sometimes preach in the evening; as appears from his fourth homily on Genesis, in which, by an eloquent digression, he reproved his hearers for turning their eyes away from himself to the man that was lighting the lamps. The Apostolical Constitutions, speaking of the Christian sabbath, say,—“On which day, we deliver three sermons in commemoration of him who rose again after three days.” The custom of modern Protestant churches throughout Christendom, except in very high latitudes, or very scattered population, requires two services on each sabbath. The ecclesiastical canons of Scotland require three in the summer and two in the winter; though general usage dispenses with one of these, in each division of the year.

It need only be mentioned, on this particular, that in the Romish church, at different periods, preaching, except rarely on occasion of some public festival, was entirely suspended for ages together; as it has been in some branches of the Greek church.

#### CIRCUMSTANCES CONNECTED WITH PREACHING.

*Posture of the preacher.*—Ancient authorities are divided on the question, whether the common posture of the preacher was sitting or standing. “The Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses’ seat.” Our Saviour, having read a passage from the prophet Isaiah,—“*sat down*, to teach the people.” “He *sat down* and taught the people out of the ship.” “He *sat* and taught his disciples in the mountain;”—and to his enemies he said, “I *sat* daily with you, teaching in the temple.”

It is certain that sitting to preach was the attitude adopted frequently by Augustine, and commonly by Justin, Origen, Athanasius, and

Chrysostom. It was probably the prevailing usage of ancient preachers, though often departed from by Christ, and by the early fathers.

*Posture of hearers.*—Justin Martyr says, in his second Apology, that when the sermon was finished in the church of Rome, the people all *rose up* to pray;—implying that they heard the sermon sitting, and united in the prayer standing. This was the general custom in the churches of Italy at that period, and in many churches of the east. But in the African churches, the indulgence of sitting to hear sermons, was strictly prohibited, except to the aged and infirm; and standing was the more prevailing custom of Christian assemblies for a long period.

Eusebius says, that when he preached, in the palace of Constantine the Great, the *Emperor stood*, with the other auditors, during the whole discourse. And when he entreated him to sit down on his throne, which was near, he refused, saying that ease and remissness was unbecoming in hearers of the divine word; and that standing in such a case, was only a decent respect to religion.

*Classification of hearers.*—In ancient Christian assemblies, distinct portions of the church were allotted to different classes of persons, designated by railings of wood; so that males were separated from females, and married from the unmarried.

The faces of hearers were generally turned towards the east, either from an insensible habit of conformity to the usages of pagans, who worshipped the rising sun; or more probably from a misconception of our Saviour’s language, in which he was supposed to say that his coming would be from the east. “As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the

west, so shall the coming of the son of man be;" that is, sudden and unexpected. The mention of east is circumstantial merely; as the same thought would have been expressed by allusion to a flash of lightning from any other quarter. The same *superstition*, for it hardly admits a better name, still determines the position of dead bodies, in the grave, as a general custom of Christendom. Heylin, in his spleen against the English Puritans, accuses them of mischievous designs, because, when repairing a place of worship in London, they took down the old pulpit, and set up a new one in such a position, as to turn the people's faces to the north, which in all primitive churches had been turned to the east.

*Prayers.*—The regular prayers of the ancient churches were offered after the sermon was closed. Ferrarius, however, informs us, that, before the preacher began his discourse, he always invoked divine aid in a short prayer, similar in kind and length, to those occasional supplications which he offered in the current of his sermon, when any point of unusual difficulty came to be discussed. In the more set prayers at the conclusion of public worship, the people, having been silent to the close, united in the audible response,—Amen.

That each minister chose his own language in prayer, without the form of a liturgy, is clear, I think, without mentioning other proof, from the fact that they generally prayed with their hands lifted up, and their eyes closed, during the first ages.

*Reading the Scriptures.*—The reading of the scriptures, either by the preacher, or some one in his stead, always was the first exercise of public worship. The subject of the sermon was usually taken from

the passage read, and where the reader was a different person from the preacher, it often happened that a fortuitous selection of the passage at the time, required from the preacher an extempore effort in the exposition. This passage, indeed, was commonly determined by previous arrangement.

*The Salutation, Pax vobis.*—To secure the attention of the people at the commencement of worship, the deacons commanded silence; the preachers addressed them with an affectionate salutation and benediction; "peace be with you,"—(the people answering, "and with thy spirit;") and at the moment of commencing his sermon, he signified by his look, and the movement of his right hand, that he expected them to give audience to what he was about to deliver. This signal of his right hand, Lucan says Julius Cæsar employed, when about to address the multitude. It was common with ancient orators, heathen and Christian. On such occasions, Peter "beckoned with his hand;"—and so did Paul, repeatedly.

*Text.*—Ancient preachers did not select a text, exactly in the modern manner. Sometimes the theme of discourse was deduced from a short clause of the lesson read, which was announced at or near the commencement of the sermon. At other times, this theme was taken from a whole lesson; at others, from several lessons. Basil, in one of his homilies, alludes to three, and in another to four distinct passages that had been read that day, from different parts of the Bible. This accounts in some measure for the fact, that the preaching of the Fathers had so much of the hortatory and discursive character, and so little unity of subject and effect.

*Subjects of sermons.*—Under this head, I might greatly extend my remarks: as a proper survey of the subjects discussed by preachers of different ages, would form a history of the pulpit, far more accurate and complete than any which has been given to the world.

Among the early fathers, sermons were adapted to two general classes of hearers, the *catechumens* and the *faithful*, or, (as they were sometimes called,) *imperiti* and *initiati*. In addressing the latter, abstruse doctrines, and the sacred mysteries of religion were often discussed; while the preacher, in instructing the catechumens, passed over these entirely, or touched them very lightly, dwelling on those simple truths and duties, which were adapted to their circumstances. Concerning the preachers of the second century, Mosheim says, "The Christian system, as it was hitherto taught, preserved its native and beautiful simplicity, and was comprehended in a small number of articles. The public teachers inculcated no other doctrines than those that are contained in what is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed*; and in the method of illustrating them, all vain subtilties, all mysterious researches beyond the reach of common capacities, were carefully avoided. This will not appear surprising to those who consider, that, at this time, there was not the least controversy about those capital doctrines of Christianity, which were afterwards so keenly debated in the church."

In the third century, the same historian says, "The principal doctrines of Christianity were explained to the people in their native purity and simplicity. But

the Christian teachers, who had applied themselves to the study of letters and philosophy, soon abandoned the frequented paths, and struck out into the devious wilds of fancy. Origen was at the head of this speculative tribe;" and though he handled this matter with modesty and caution, his disciples, breaking from the limits fixed by their master, interpreted in the most licentious manner, the divine truths of religion, according to the tenor of the Platonic philosophy.

Gregory Nazianzen, in enumerating the subjects commonly discussed in the pulpit, mentions,—"The universal providence of God, the creation, fall, and restoration of man, the incarnation, and second coming of Christ; the resurrection, judgment, and the final state of rewards and punishments; and above all, he says, the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, which was the principal article of the Christian faith." Chrysostom, in his preaching to plain hearers, selected such subjects as these:—"the benefit of afflictions; not seeking to know all things, is supreme wisdom; the reproach of this world is glory; death is better than life; it is better to suffer, than to inflict injury." In his twenty-fourth homily, on the baptism of Christ, he reminds his hearers, that the scope of his preaching had been concerning "immortality, heaven and hell, the long suffering of God, pardon, repentance, true faith, mystery, &c."

I need not trace the regular and lamentable degeneracy of the pulpit from this time, onward to the reformation. Ferrarius, though when he wrote, the day of better things had dawned, described some preachers, who, during the darker periods of the church, discussed the most frivolous questions; such

as "Whether Abel was slain with a club, and of what species of wood?—from what sort of tree was Moses' rod taken?—was the gold which the Magi offered to Christ, coined, or in mass?" Hottinger says, that in a collection of sermons, composed by the theological faculty of Vienna, A. D. 1430, a regular history is given of the *thirty pieces*, which Judas had for betraying his master. These pieces were said to be coined by Terah, father of Abraham; and having passed through a succession of hands, too ridiculous to be named, they came into the possession of the Virgin Mary, as a present from the Magi, and went into the temple as an offering for her purification. At the same period, Ferrarius complains that some preachers made a great ostentation of their acquaintance with ancient languages, versions, paraphrases, and manuscripts. For a considerable period before the Reformation, the prevailing topics of the pulpit were, "the authority of the mother church; the merits and intercession of departed saints; the dignity of the blessed Virgin; the efficacy of relics; and above all, the terrors of *purgatory*, and the utility of *indulgences*." Sermons consisted of quibbles, fables, and prodigies; and religion consisted of external ceremonies. And be it remembered for ever, that this prostitution of the pulpit, was followed by the reprobation of heaven on a church, which for centuries has been gasping under the hand of death.

The meridian splendour of that light, which shone at the Reformation, was soon obscured in different countries, by the combined influence of worldly policy and religious controversy. When the Baxters and Howes of the English

pulpit were denounced, in the days of Charles the Second, its glory departed. The rich and fervid instructions of the preceding age, were superseded by dry and speculative disquisitions, and the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel by the precepts of a cold and decent morality. And be it remembered again, that when real Christianity was thus supplanted in the pulpit, by a spurious and secular theology, the door was opened, at which entered the various forms of Arian and Socinian error, and finally of the most unqualified infidelity.

#### INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES IN SERMONS.

I have adverted to the influence of Origen in corrupting the primitive simplicity of religion. Guided, not by a sober judgment, but by a wayward fancy, he laid down the broad principle, absurd as it is bold, "that the Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written." Hence he maintained that the Bible is to be interpreted as the Platonists explained the history of their gods; not according to the common acceptance of the words, but according to a *hidden sense*. This hidden sense he divided into *moral* and *mystical*; and the latter he subdivided into the *inferior* or *allegorical* sense, and the *superior* or *celestial* sense. This machinery, when put in full operation, and recommended by the genius and learning of Origen, degraded the Bible at once from its paramount authority, as the standard of faith; and made it subservient to the dreams of every visionary interpreter. Under the cover of this *mystical meaning*, little ingenuity was necessary to elicit from the Scriptures support for any opinion,



however repugnant to Christianity and common sense.\*

Among the Greeks, Gregory Nazianzen, and Augustine among the Latins, became zealous supporters of scholastic theology; combining in a most incongruous union, the doctrines of the Gospel with those of the Platonic philosophy; and drawing conclusions too absurd to have been thought of by Christ or Plato. Every coincidence of phraseology was fraught with important meaning. Augustine regarded the plagues of Egypt as a most pointed testimony against the sins of the Egyptians, because the ten plagues corresponded exactly in number with the ten commandments which they had broken. No doubt the commentator forgot that these ten commandments were given long after the plagues; and not given to Egyptians, but Jews.

If I were to indulge a single reflection here, it would be this, that the whole superstructure of doc-

trinal and practical religion depends on the principles adopted in interpreting the Scriptures.—Origen and a few other distinguished men, were responsible for all the absurdities of transubstantiation, and all the fooleries of superstition, that deluged the church ages after they were dead.

From the sixth to the twelfth century, public instruction consisted of arguments and authorities drawn, not from the Bible, but from the writings of the fathers. So servile was the veneration for those infallible guides, that it was deemed impious not to submit, implicitly, in every article of faith, to their decisions. In the twelfth century, Christian teachers were divided into two classes. The former were called *biblici* and *dogmatici*, or expository and didactic divines.—These professed great reverence for the Bible, and gave insipid explanations of what they called its "*internal juice and marrow*." The latter were called *scholastici*, and avowedly subjected all articles of faith to the decisions of philosophy. The grand point of religion, however, through these dark ages, to the time of Luther, was to know the decision of the sovereign Pontiff, and then to believe and act without examination.

#### REASONING IN SERMONS.

Chrysostom, in his treatise Περὶ Ἱερωσύνης, requires the Christian preacher to be skilful in *dialectics*. The utility of this he shows, at some length, from the argumentative powers of Paul. The reasoning of this father, though it is sometimes perspicuous and cogent to a high degree, is rather of the *rhetorical* kind than the *logical*; in other words, it is characterized rather by the vivid illustrations of oratory than by the regular induc-

\* From the endless examples of fanciful interpretations furnished in the pages of Origen, I select but one. The prophet Isaiah, having rebuked the splendour and luxury of the Hebrew women, declares, that in the approaching havoc of war, such would be the slaughter of males that only one would be left to seven females. These latter, to escape the dread reproach of celibacy, would beg for the mere name and credit of wedlock, renouncing all its legal privileges. "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, we will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Let us see how this plain and vivid description of a great public calamity, is metamorphosed by the magic of a hidden sense.

These seven women, Origen says, are "seven operations of the Divine Spirit; viz. a spirit of wisdom, of intelligence, of council, of virtue, of knowledge, of piety, and the fear of the Lord." The man they take hold of is Jesus Christ, that he may take away the reproach which the world heaps upon true religion.

tions of argument. But with the exception of Chrysostom and a few others, very little that deserves the name of reasoning, is to be found among the fathers. They were not accustomed to define terms and anatomize the subject, by investigating elementary principles. Their sermons, even when rich in thought, were commonly destitute of precision and skilful arrangement; and too often, what were called demonstrations, consisted of incoherent allegories and conceits, more adapted to amuse the fancy, than to convince the judgment.

#### PREPARATION OF SERMONS.

How far the practice of preaching extemporary discourses prevailed among the fathers, cannot be determined with certainty.—Origen is supposed to be the first who introduced this method. This, however, he did not attempt, as Eusebius affirms, till he was more than sixty years of age, and had acquired, by experience, great freedom in the pulpit. That Augustine did sometimes preach without any preparation, is unquestionable; for, in one instance, he tells us that the reader, instead of reading the passage of Scripture, prescribed as the subject of the sermon, gave out another by mistake; which compelled him to change his purpose, and preach without premeditation. Ferrarius quotes Suidas, as saying that Chrysostom had a tongue flowing like the Nile, which enabled him to deliver his panegyrics on the Martyrs, extempore. The versatility of powers possessed by this great preacher, appears from innumerable instances, in which he dropped the main subject, and with the utmost pertinence and fluency of language, pursued any accidental thought suggested at the moment.

But though there were, in the

primitive ages, many exceptions, it seems plainly to have been the general usage, that sermons were written. No other proof of this is necessary, if we advert to the indisputable fact that some skilful writer often composed homilies, which other preachers, and even dignitaries in the church, delivered as their own. Ferrarius alludes to discourses as still extant, which were written by Ennodius, for the use of others.

This practice Augustine not only recognizes, but formally justifies, in behalf of those who are destitute of *invention*, but can speak well; provided they select well-written discourses of another man, and commit them to memory, for the instruction of their hearers.

In different countries and periods, there has been considerable diversity in the custom of preparing sermons. Before the civil wars in England, preaching without notes had become common. During those commotions, when each pulpit was surrounded with spies, and each word of the preacher liable to be the ground of civil indictment, personal safety required him to *write* and *read* his sermons with care. Hence this singular, official order of Charles the Second, addressed to the University of Cambridge, forbidding, absolutely, that sermons should be *read*; and requiring that they should be delivered by memory, without book, and that the name of every preacher disregarding this requisition, should be forthwith reported to his Majesty.

The fact, however, was at that time, and since Mr. Addison recommended the practice, is still more common, that the sermons of many English clergymen, whether delivered from memory or from manuscript, have, to a considerable extent, been borrowed from books,

or from the more private compositions of other men. The influence of this practice on the English pulpit, will require some remarks in another lecture.

There can be no doubt that sermons among the fathers, were generally precomposed, and delivered, sometimes with, but more commonly without, the aid of written notes.

#### ELOQUENCE OF SERMONS.

The two most distinguished ancient treatises on this subject were that of Chrysostom,—*De Sacerdoto*, and of Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*;\* from which we learn that these luminaries of the Greek and Latin church, had exalted views of sacred eloquence. Their sermons, too, especially those of Chrysostom, furnish many examples of an elegant, fervent, and even sublime oratory. His accurate acquaintance with the human heart, his varied learning, and vivid fancy, furnished him with inexhaustible stores of argument and illustration. Yet he did not seek to *appear* learned; and never descended from his noble simplicity, to adopt those affected beauties of style, which sometimes debased the eloquence of Augustine.

Among the Latin fathers, *Jerome*, of the fourth century, might be mentioned as one of the most distinguished for learning and eloquence. During his education at Rome, he devoted himself to the art of oratory, that he might successfully defend Christianity. —*Erasmus* pronounces him “the greatest scholar, the greatest orator, and the greatest divine, that the church had produced,” including his predecessors of the three centuries before. His writings are valuable, not only for vigour and

elegance of style, but for biblical learning.

*Lactantius*, of the same century, though less sound as a theologian, was eminent as a Latin writer. He was a professed *rhetorician*. The beauty and elegance of his writings, acquired him the title of “the Christian Cicero,” and induced the Emperor Constantine to choose him as teacher to his son.

Among the Greek fathers, the homilies of *Basil*, while they are preferred, by some competent judges, to those of Chrysostom, in classical purity of style, are second only to his in point of eloquence, and the two Gregories occupy the next rank. That these men possessed real eloquence, might be inferred from the effect of their preaching on their hearers. When Chrysostom was banished, the people said, with one voice, “it were better that the *sun* should cease to shine, than that his mouth should be shut;” and this, notwithstanding he often bore down on his hearers in a torrent of bold and pointed reproof, such as is seldom heard from any modern pulpit. Take an example from his reprehension of those who were averse to reading the Scriptures, but zealous for hearing sermons, and who demanded novelty and pomp in the pulpit. “Tell me,” said he, “with what pomp of words did St. Paul preach?—yet he converted the world. What pomp did the illiterate Peter use? You say, we cannot *understand* the things that are written in the Gospel. Why so? Are they spoken in Hebrew or Latin?—are they not spoken in Greek, to you who understand Greek? But they are spoken darkly. How darkly? Are the histories obscure? There are a thousand histories in the Bible; tell me one of them. You cannot tell one. Oh! but the reading of

\* Lib. IV.

the Scriptures is a mere repetition of the same things! And are not the same things repeated at the theatre, and at the horse-race? Does not the same sun rise every morning? Do you not eat the same sort of food every day? If we ask, why do you not remember our sermons?—you answer, how should we, seeing they always change, and we hear them but once?—If we ask, Why do you not remember the Scriptures? You answer, they are always the same. These are nothing but pretences for idleness.\* I had selected an extract from the same father, on the advantages of eloquence in a preacher, but my limits forbid its insertion.\*

#### LENGTH OF SERMONS.

Cicero and Pliny allude to an instrument called *clepsydra*, used by Greek and Roman orators to measure time, by drops of water. Ferrarius says that Italian preachers of his day, used an hour-glass, with sands, for the same purpose; though there is no certainty that any such usage existed among the fathers. He affirms, however, upon what I think, inadequate evidence, that the customary length of their sermons was about *one hour*.

This point cannot be determined from the expressions so common in preaching; “allotted hour,” “hour of sermon,” &c. which may denote merely that there was a stated time of public worship. Nor can it be known, from the printed sermons of the day, for two reasons. One is, that when the same audience was addressed by several preachers, in immediate succession, as was frequently the fact, sermons would, of course, be more brief, than when the whole time was appropriated to one man. The other

reason is, the impossibility of distinguishing homilies, preserved by the original manuscripts of preachers, from those taken down by short-hand writers, called *ταχυγραφοι* by the Greeks, and *notarii* by the Latins. The custom which Chrysostom applauds, of repeating sermons in families, after they returned from church, introduced the practice of note-taking. These notes of hearers were sometimes published, after a revision by the preacher, and sometimes without his consent. In this way many homilies transmitted to us, are mere scraps of those which were actually delivered. For example: Chrysostom's first sermon on Lazarus, must have occupied near sixty minutes in delivery. Whereas others, as they appear in his printed works, and the same is true, concerning those of Augustine, would have required scarcely a tenth part of this time. On the whole, it is evident that sermons, as delivered by Christ, and the Apostles, and the primitive fathers, varied in length with circumstances:—that after Origen's time, they became longer, less desultory, and more conformed to the rules of Grecian eloquence; but that, in Chrysostom's day, they must have been less than an hour in length, as this was the customary time of the whole religious service.\*

#### EFFECT OF SERMONS.

The silence and order which decency demands in a modern Christian assembly, did not prevail in the ancient church. To prevent

\* In some cases, it would seem that what is given to us as one continued sermon, must have been delivered at several times. The sermon of Erasmus on the fourth Psalm, is as long as five modern sermons. Editors probably took the same liberty as that by which several discourses of President Edwards have been embodied into a continued treatise.

\* See works, Vol. I. p. 408.

passing in and out during sermon, different measures were adopted; such as severe church censures, placing officers at the entrance of the church, and sometimes locking the doors.

The best preachers often reprov'd their hearers for talking and jesting in time of worship. In imitation of the pagan theatre, it became an extensive custom for hearers to express their approbation of a sermon, by tumultuous applauses, such as stamping, clapping, waving of handkerchiefs, and loud acclamations. Thus the hearers of Cyril cried out, in the midst of his sermon, *orthodox Cyril!* And Chrysostom's, in another case, exclaimed, "*Thou art the thirteenth*

*Apostle!*" These applauses were, in many cases, mere matter of form, and were uttered without any intelligent apprehension of what the preacher had delivered. Thus Augustine reprov'd his hearers, in one instance, for interrupting him with their acclamations, when he had only begun to speak, but had not expressed a single thought. But many other preachers encouraged these disorders, from motives of vain glory. They had their reward,—while the illustrious men, whose simple aim was to feed their hearers with the bread of life, saw their faithful ministrations blest, to the saving conversion of many souls.

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#### THE PRIMARY ADDRESS OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

[The following admirable paper was unanimously adopted by the Ministers and Messengers of our Churches who were assembled at the Congregational Library, London, May 13, 1834.]

**BELoved BRETHREN.**—We offer you our most cordial and affectionate salutations in Christ Jesus, and desire that grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, may be multiplied unto you. We entreat your favourable acceptance of this fraternal address, which we desire should breathe the spirit of meekness and love. Indeed, our anxiety in addressing you is greatly relieved by a persuasion that our communication will be accepted with candour and love. Our hearts are enlarged towards you with a glow of sacred affection; and this we pray, that our mutual love may abound yet more and more, not without the hope that the Great Source of light and love may employ this

address as a happy means of its enlargement and increase.

You are already informed of the origin, progress, and design of that general Union of our churches, which has assembled us together at this time. We cannot fully express the satisfaction with which we assure you that the success of our undertaking has hitherto equalled our most sanguine hopes, and that the prospect of its permanent beneficial effects on our whole Christian brotherhood is bright and cheering. We feel persuaded our design has been approved and prospered by our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not deterred, by fear of the charge of presumption, from testifying our persuasion that we have enjoyed in our assemblies the presence and



grace of the Holy Spirit. We have felt how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to meet together in unity. We have felt the strength as well as the pleasure of union; have felt strong in the Lord for the defence of the truth, for the spread of the gospel, for the great struggle against the powers and interests of darkness, while realizing our recognised association with the many thousands of our brethren, all of one heart and of one mind with ourselves. The spirit of union has been felt and displayed among us in patient discussion, in willing concession, in calm and candid attempts to remove difficulties, to conciliate prejudices, and to lay the foundations of our Union firm and lasting, not by sacrifice or compromise of principle, but by rendering the Union no closer in its terms, no wider in its objects, than our common principles will allow.

Christian Brethren, we affectionately invite you to a participation in the labours, joys, and hopes of this our Union. We embrace all who have already entered this fraternal association, with unfeigned esteem and love. The presence of you all, were that possible, at these our delightful seasons of fellowship, would rejoice our souls; where that is impracticable, we entreat communion of spirit—your prayers for us, as we offer ours with fervent entreaties for you—your interest and co-operation in the great objects for the accomplishment of which this Union was formed—and the exercise of a new and especial regard for the whole united fraternity, in the distinct recognition of this super-added and interesting relation to them.

We extend the right hand of invitation to all our brethren not yet associated with us in this

Christian union. Allow us to say, "Come with us, and we will do you good," as we are assured your accession to our numbers will be to our advantage and joy. You will strengthen our hands, and animate our hearts: you will add to the wisdom of our counsels, and the ardour of our affections. Our Union, as it spreads to a wider extent, and embraces greater numbers, will diffuse through multiplied minds, the same affections, sentiments, and purposes; and the assembled representatives of the Union will, on every occasion, speak with greater weight, both to their own body, and to the public at large, in proportion as they are the expositors of the opinions and designs of a more extended constituency.

Allow us too, in the spirit of love, to invite the attendance of our brethren to the utmost practicable extent at our successive general assemblies. Meet with us, beloved friends, on these important occasions. Bring with you, as the Lord shall divide severally to each one, the spirit of wisdom or of prayer; of sacred philanthropy, or of power, and love, and a sound mind. Come, and cast these rich and varied gifts into the common treasury, that we may participate with you in the hallowed benefit; that in a communion so blessed, we may warm, and elevate, and enlarge each other's minds; that we may realize the communion of saints, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

We are persuaded, beloved Brethren, you will unanimously respond to a prayer we feel constrained to insert,—That, by the good hand of our God upon us, our fairest hopes from this Union may be realized; and that it may be perpetuated to our posterity in lasting peace and efficiency.

Greatly do we rejoice that, in

addressing you, we find so many subjects on which we can employ the language of humble yet thankful congratulation. It is a sacred and heartfelt joy to us, to feel assured that our pastors and churches retain an unchanged, enlightened, and most cordial attachment to those great evangelical truths, which are the glory of the gospel, and which were committed by the venerable founders of our Congregational churches, to them, as to divinely-appointed depositories, for their sure preservation from age to age, and for their ultimate spread throughout the whole family of man. We have a recent and most pleasing evidence of the unanymous constancy of our body in these sacred truths, afforded by the general and harmonious reception of the DECLARATION of those things most surely believed among us, set forth by the last general meeting of this Union. Christian Brethren, our joy and gratitude for this abiding universal attachment of our churches to gospel truth, is in full proportion to our deep sense of the value and importance of those doctrines; of their inseparable connection with the glory of Christ, the salvation of souls, the vitality of religion, and the prosperity of the church; and of their sacred authority and certain truth, as the sure sayings of God in his inspired Word. Bear with us, Brethren, if we mingle here the language of entreaty with that of congratulation. Abide in the truth. Let the fall and ruin of man; the deity and incarnation of the Son of God; the priestly office and atoning sacrifice of the Saviour; justification by faith, and salvation by free and sovereign grace; the work, power, and grace of the Holy Spirit; the regeneration of the human heart;

and the vital, experimental nature of true godliness: let these, and their associated or subordinate truths, continue to be not only your creed, but your glory. Beloved Brethren in the Ministry, hide not these great doctrines in obscurity. Give them no cold or timid commendation. Glory in them before God and your hearers. You know how to exhibit them in their lovely harmony with all the interests of holiness, in their power and tendency to produce all the fruits of righteousness. Never shall we tremble for the ark of our Zion, while these glorious truths hold their due place in our conviction and our affections; while our ministers determine to know nothing else in their public labours, and while our churches will not receive, nor bid God speed to any who bring not this doctrine.

We rejoice with you also, dear Brethren, in the many evidences from which we infer, with humble gratitude, that the favour and presence of God are still vouchsafed to our churches. We believe they do not decline in numbers or piety. We trust there is in both respects an advance which, if it does not equal our desires and hopes, yet forbids despondency, and encourages effort. The ministry of the word is still with power among us in the conversion of sinners, the defence of the truth, and the joy and edification of the faithful. God continues to us an able and faithful ministry in the several stages of official progress. We retain with us still, through the sparing mercy of God, venerated fathers, the associates of holy men mighty in their day, now in glory, of whose faith, spirit, manner of life, and labour, they are to us the living exemplars. We have a goodly host of labourers in the full vigour of their powers,

bearing the heat and burden of the day. And we can turn with the eye of hope and confidence to the schools of the prophets, and to our younger brethren who have of late years completed their training there, for an unbroken succession of men sound in the faith and valiant for the truth. In this, as in a special token of the Divine favour, we do rejoice, yea, and we will rejoice.

Nor can we omit, as a subject of most sincere and heartfelt satisfaction, the spirit of union, peace, and love generally reigning among our ministers and churches. Partial and painful exceptions undoubtedly occur; but we are well assured, you will as much rejoice to confirm the statement as we to make it, that with a remarkable concurrence of opinion, as nearly approaching substantial unanimity as can be found on earth, among an equal number of associated Christians, is connected a spirit of fraternal affection, and cordial co-operation, among our ministers and churches. This, at any time and under any circumstances, would be a subject of delightful contemplation; but possesses a peculiar interest and value at the present juncture, as it affords the most encouraging hope of the lasting harmony and efficiency of this organized Union we have now formed, to be the appropriate expression and instrument of the real union that existed before, by which it may put forth its energies for the attainment of great objects, either peculiar to the interests of our own body, or affecting those of the church of Christ, to a larger extent.

It affords us great pleasure to observe, that our entire community sustains a share honourable to it, in the support of those great institutions and enterprises of Christian

N. S. NO. 115.

philanthropy, by which our age is happily distinguished; that no sectarian prejudices, or exclusive interests, impede our co-operation with Christian brethren of other denominations, in those great views and plans which, stretching beyond all party distinctions and objects, take the world for their field, the Bible for their instrument, the salvation of souls and the honour of Christ for their end. It would be equally our reproach and our injury, if we were of another spirit and practice in this respect. Be it still our pleasure, as it is our duty, to harmonize with the spirit of the age in all that kindles hope, and awakens effort, for the enlargement of the Saviour's peaceful kingdom, and for the diffusion of its blessings throughout the entire world.

We also notice, as a subject for mutual congratulation, that at a time, when not a few have been led far astray from sober views of truth and duty, by wild fancies and vain imaginations; exhibiting all the presumptuous pretensions and bitter uncharitableness of a fanatical spirit; deceiving and being deceived, as we fear, in a course of extravagant opinions, and more extravagant practices; our ministers and churches have, with few and inconsiderable exceptions, been preserved from the spreading contagion; a security for which, under God, we believe ourselves to be chiefly indebted to the sound theological training which so properly forms in our colleges a large portion of ministerial education; and to those just views of sacred truth thence communicated, in a regular and constant course of pulpit instruction to our churches. Happy if we shall still retain unimpaired the hallowed union of knowledge and feeling—never allowing our light to become cold

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and chill by the absence of a glow of divine ardour—never permitting our warmest emotions to escape from the control and guidance of an enlightened judgment.

We have alluded to the spirit and character of the age in which we live. In every successive period, there is a peculiar posture of affairs and circumstances in human society, relative to which the church of Christ has especial duties to discharge, and peculiar perils to avoid. The watchmen placed on the walls of Zion must, therefore, carefully note the changing aspects of the times, that they may direct their efforts with a wise adaptation to present exigencies. We need but remind you, that the present is an age of active inquiry and advancing intelligence. Religion can no more than other subjects escape the searching spirit of the times; and can occupy the commanding position due to its importance, only through the medium of a learned, intelligent, and able ministry of the word. We commend, therefore, to your most serious consideration, the state of learning among our ministers, and of general intelligence throughout our body. We greatly rejoice in what has been accomplished of late years, to secure for our rising ministry a liberal education. We have high satisfaction in the learning, talents, and wisdom of our honoured Brethren who preside over our various seminaries of sacred literature. We acknowledge without reluctance, that our ministers equal, in learning strictly theological, those of any other body of professing Christians of our times. But we earnestly entreat of all our brethren who can appreciate the importance of the object, their cordial and energetic support of every well-considered plan, to advance to still higher efficiency the cause

of sacred learning in our body. We need not enlarge on the inestimable value to the cause of religion, of eminent learning devoutly consecrated to its service;—especially of knowledge, sound and deep, on all those subjects that can contribute to the unanswerable defence of Holy Scripture as a Divine revelation; the most accurate rendering of its hallowed sentences into our own tongue; and the most exact exposition of their true meaning. Encourage, therefore, beloved Brethren, every effort to advance our ministers to higher attainments in sacred literature. Promote every where among our people a more just appreciation of that invaluable ministerial qualification. If a longer term of preparatory education can be obtained in our colleges;—if the students best qualified to profit by such an additional advantage can be favoured with a subsequent course of study at the Universities, we hope there will be a general feeling in favour of plans so well adapted to enrich the rising ministry with sacred and varied knowledge. We are all aware how much more necessary an extended course of early study for ministers of the gospel is rendered in our days, by the great variety of active, public, and often distracting engagements, in which, too soon after their introduction into the pastoral office, they find themselves involved, and by which their habits of study, and progress in learning, are often fatally interrupted. We recommend to your favourable notice, the Congregational lecture, established in connection with this general Union, with a view to call into public service the learning and talents of our eminent scholars. The volume on Christian Ethics, published by our much honoured brother, Dr. Wardlaw, as the

first-fruits of this excellent design, equally rich in sound learning, and in the faithful, uncompromising statement of evangelical truth, will cheer and animate his successors in this honourable service. Nor do we merely plead for the advance of our ministers in sacred learning, but would animate our whole body with the spirit of inquiry and intelligence. We have no interests to serve, no objects to gain, which ignorance can befriend or advance. Knowledge is the element of our prosperity; inquiry and discussion are the instruments of our advancement; truth is the foundation of our stability. We do not desire an ignorant and confiding laity, a crafty and imposing priesthood; but would rejoice in the reciprocal influence of advancing intelligence in both ministers and people,—the enlightened discourses of the pulpit awakening and directing the mind of the people; the intelligence of the people demanding and appreciating an enlarged and elevated range of ministerial instruction. These are views, always just and important, which Protestant Dissenters cannot at this juncture neglect, without risking, not their honour and prosperity only, but their existence.

The great topics now engaging eager and general discussion, relative to civil establishments of the Christian religion under any or various forms, are of great moment to Congregational Christians. They, in the providence of God, are the selected witnesses, to testify before the world on behalf of the exclusively simple, spiritual, heavenly character of the kingdom of Christ, in respect of its outward support, establishment, and extension in the world. They are called to bear an uncompromising testimony against long-established,

and, to worldly interests, most profitable, abuses in hierarchies established and endowed by secular powers. It is especially for them to contend for the primitive simplicity of the church; the voluntary support of religion; and, in a word, for the application of the authority of the New Testament, and of no other, to determine every question relative to the faith and worship, the order and discipline, of the church. This great controversy is, with Congregational Christians, purely and only an affair of religion. If, in its progress, or in any of its applications, it brings them into collision with any political institutions, interests, or powers; that is with them a circumstance altogether undesigned and incidental. They pursue a straight and undeviating course in contending for the Christianity of the New Testament. The obstacles they meet with in that course were placed where they are by other hands, not by their's. But truth is sacred—most of all, the truth as it is in Jesus. The duty of contending for it, in all its applications, is paramount to every other interest and obligation. We seek not to contend with any party, either in Church or State, but we must not shun the conflict, when truth cannot otherwise triumph and reign. Meanwhile, beloved Brethren, let us be mindful of the dangers of this most arduous controversy. If, in its progress we must suffer reproach, let us not deserve it. Be it our care to regard our share in it as a conscientious stand for the truth and purity of Christ's gospel. Let us maintain a wise dread of the withering, antichristian spirit of political faction and discord. Let us prove, by all our proceedings in relation to this object, that we contend for spiritual prosperity in every other



communion as well as in our own; that our plea of conscience and religion is no cloak to conceal other less sacred designs; that, under every difficulty and delay, every reproach and alienation we encounter while labouring to bring back the kingdom of Christ to its primitive simplicity, we can carry our cause and our efforts to the throne of God, committing them to Him who judgeth righteously, with a supporting confidence of His approval. Suffer, dear Brethren, the word of exhortation on this subject, equally important and delicate. We feel deeply anxious in respect to it. We tremble lest it should prove injurious to our spiritual interests. On the justness of our principles, on the duty and necessity of the public testimony we bear to them, our convictions are strong and unwavering. Only let all be done with charity, prayer, meekness. Only let our stand for spirituality in the institutions of the gospel be an occasion for the exercise and advancement of spirituality in our own hearts;—then truth will at last gain a hallowed triumph, realized not by clamour, passion, and discord; purchased not at the expense of Christian honour, temper, and charity sacrificed in the struggle; but arriving at the natural and gentle result of the power of truth, the progress of events, and the will God, to become in its turn the commencement and the occasion of a new and triumphant career to the then purified and liberated gospel, shining in its own light, and travelling in its own strength, to gain for itself universal dominion.

As closely allied with this topic, and peculiarly appropriate to the present period, we would address you, Brethren, on the pleasing

subject of an enlarged and liberal charity to our Christian brethren of every other denomination. We have not formed our general Union as a proceeding by which our denomination might seclude itself, in a spirit of sectarianism, from other Christian communities. On the contrary, as we desire to obtain, through it, new and nearer fellowship among ourselves, so also we intended it for a medium of more direct, solemn, and affectionate communion with our evangelical brethren of other denominations and other countries. Our convictions, our attachments to those points of doctrine and discipline which are peculiar and distinctive to ourselves, are not impaired. Our affections, our satisfactions, within the circle of our own special brotherhood, are unchanged or increased. But, Brethren, we delight to expatiate in a more ample field of fraternal union and love—to realize our present and eternal association, in one unbroken family, with all believers—to recognize our common faith in grand uniting truths and hopes, our universal union with the one great centre of attraction, Christ Jesus, binding all to each other, as he binds all to himself. It affords us just and Christian satisfaction to know there is nothing in those sentiments on doctrine, or in those practices in worship and discipline peculiar to our churches, that can have any tendency to restrain or impede the largest exercise of catholic affection to all Christians; the most free and cordial co-operation with them in every comprehensive undertaking for the advancement of common Christianity; or the most affectionate communion with them on every suitable occasion in the worship and ordinances of our common Lord and Saviour.

You will consider this fraternal

address, Christian Brethren, most blameably defective, if you should find it closed without allusion to a subject of the deepest interest and most solemn moment,—those enlarged communications of the gracious influences of God's holy Spirit, so urgently needed at the present most interesting period, and already vouchsafed to many of the churches of America, in a measure calculated equally to awaken hope that we too may obtain similar times of refreshing, and to demand anxious inquiries why we have not yet been successful in our earnest supplications to the throne of grace for larger measures of that transcendent blessing. Should not we long and thirst, dear Brethren, for the solemn, delightful season of an extensive revival produced by unwonted communications of the Spirit? when ministers and churches, filled with the Spirit, should be raised to high degrees of life and power, holiness and joy in the service of Christ; when the word and ordinances of the gospel, attended with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, should produce effects to astonish and delight every devout mind; when the coldness, feebleness, reluctance, and timidity in Christian enterprise, now too generally prevalent among us, should be succeeded by universal faith, zeal, and holy courage; when a state of things should take place, which, in our present dim, and chill, and feeble condition, we can scarcely realize even in imagination or hope. Brethren, the residue of the Spirit is with God. We are not straitened in Him, but in ourselves. Let us not allow this most interesting subject to fall into neglect. Amidst our busy discussions, various plans, and hurried engagements, let not this great subject, the importance of which swallows

up that of all others, be forgotten. Longing desires and persevering prayers for this heavenly dew, will assuredly obtain, at length, a rich satisfaction. We propose no plan or season of general consentaneous supplication, but we are pressed in spirit to recommend our beloved Brethren, throughout our entire body, to dwell on this great theme in their thoughts; to give it a prominent place daily in secret wrestlings with God; to omit it on no occasion of domestic, social, or public approach to the throne of grace. To whatever quarter, at the present juncture, we turn, this presents itself as the great want, the main desideratum. Our foreign missions, our home labours, the advance in knowledge, the apathy in respect to religion of numerous and influential classes of our countrymen, the affecting disproportion between extensive means employed and limited success obtained, the conviction that our doctrine is sound, our means scriptural, and yet our results but feeble; every topic of reflection, every just description of the present aspect of things in relation to the gospel of Christ, addresses us in unanimous, unequivocal, urgent language, to seek the excellency of the power which is not of us, but of God. Not that we should relax or grow weary in the use of any means, but that, with this perseverance in scriptural labour, we should agonize in prayer for the power of the Spirit. And, O, Brethren, how glad, how glorious, will be the day of our success—the day of Christ's power! We shall be as they that dream; rising, glowing, rejoicing in the new-felt power of God; amazed and animated with the moral energy, the spiritual grace every where around us putting forth its buds, its blossoms, its fruits; we shall rise and sing,—“Lo, the

winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear in the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

And finally, dear Brethren, allow us to commend to your serious consideration, the great and pressing duty of directing our united attention and efforts to the improvement of our own denomination. We say not this in a party or sectarian spirit. It is, in reason, our first duty. We fear it has been too much overlooked and neglected. Our wisest counsels, our most vigorous exertions, are now needed, to redeem time that has been lost, and to repair mischiefs occasioned by past neglect. This wise care for the prosperity of our own body, is as necessary to its general usefulness, as to its particular interests. We can exert a salutary influence on other sections of the church, and on society at large; we can lend efficient co-operation for advancing the interests of our common Christianity only as our churches themselves rise in purity and power, knowledge and spirituality. Even the spread and growing influence of those sentiments and practices peculiar to ourselves, cannot be an object of indifference to us, if we be sincere in our belief of their truth, and correct in our estimate of their importance. A catholic and latitudinarian spirit are widely opposite. The first thing necessary to this just denominational zeal and faithfulness, was an organized Union, a common centre, an arrangement for correspondence, discussion, and statement of opinion on our own interests, within our own body. This great desideratum, the Union now happily consummated, supplies. Through it, as the centre and medium of common effort, and by the co-

operation of all, in their respective spheres of individual influence and labour, let us now seek the good of our Zion, the advance of our body in learning and intelligence; its preservation in sound doctrine, its growth in spiritual godliness; the multiplication of our churches, and the increase of our moral and social influence. Let us give due attention to all subjects affecting the liberties, the statistics, the secular interests of our body. Let us endeavour to awaken a public spirit within our own denomination, and aim to realize all the energies and advantages of voluntary union, effort, and contribution. These great objects can be obtained only by general concurrence and co-operation. Our churches throughout the country must all share in these labours and charges for the common good. Nor are we at all apprehensive but that, as our Union becomes mature and efficient, and the objects to the attainment of which it would direct the combined energies of our churches are distinctly understood, the cordial and vigorous co-operation of our whole community may be securely reckoned upon.

There are many specific objects of general interest to our denomination, and of necessary attainment in order to its prosperity, on behalf of which we might have invited attention and effort;—such as the contribution of the necessary funds, without which this general Union cannot possibly carry on its proceedings; the providing assistance for our smaller churches, and for our aged and superannuated ministers; a regular and effective system for the erection and enlargement of chapels, in cases where the congregations, needing such accommodation, are unable, by their unassisted efforts, to pro-

vide it; the planting new churches, both in towns and rural districts, by employing a portion of the wealth and numbers of neighbouring interests, already flourishing, as a colony to form the basis of an additional society, where the state of the population renders such a proceeding necessary, and warrants the hope of its success; on these, and similar topics we forbear now to enlarge. Our chief object in this first Address, is rather to open this channel of friendly and beneficial intercourse with the whole body of our beloved Brethren. We hope that, in future annual letters from this Union, each object of general interest will successively receive specific notice, and the means of its attainment be distinctly pointed out for general and effective concurrence.

Finally, Brethren, farewell. The God of love and peace be with you! The power and grace of the Holy Spirit rest upon you! Out of the fulness of our hearts we have addressed you as brothers and equals, with all plainness and affection. To write thus to you has been to us a delightful service, and has drawn out our hearts in a conscious exercise of tender and expansive affection. If, in the perusal of our communication, you reciprocate our affection and share our pleasure, our joy will be complete, our purpose accomplished.

Signed on behalf of the meeting,

G. REDFORD, LL. D. *Chairman.*

JOHN BLACKBURN, } *Secretaries.*

W. S. PALMER, }

JOSHUA WILSON,

## ESSAYS ON NONCONFORMITY.

### No. VI.

THE advocates of a religion established by law contend, that such a system is necessary in order to ensure uniformity, and to prevent the evils of heresy and schism.

Is it a fact, then, that the religious establishment of England does prevent heresy and schism? On the contrary, do not these evils exist to an enormous extent, even in the very bosom of that establishment, and among her very ministers? The uniformity which is secured is external only; the surface is uniform, while the interior contains, not variety merely, but contrariety. Her ministers wear similar habiliments; but here

the uniformity ends. Their religious opinions are indeed *presumed* to be the same, every one of them having declared his "unfeigned assent and consent" to the same formularies, but what is the fact? The hyper-calvinism of Dr. Hawker, (himself a Churchman,) the visions of Swedenborg, and the reveries of poor Joanna Southcott, have all found advocates among Church of England divines. Some of her clergy have been known to be friendly to the dangerous errors of Arius and Socinus, while the majority of her ministers, age after age, have embraced an extremely low Arminianism. The recent and still prevalent enthusiasm respecting the supposed re-

newal of the gift of tongues, the working of miracles, and the approach of the personal reign of Christ upon earth, finds abettors almost exclusively among the ministers and members of the Establishment, while Christians unconnected with the Establishment, with few exceptions, have no relish for these fanatical opinions, but prefer proceeding in "the good old way."

Between the various ministers of the Established Church one broad line of demarcation is visible to every eye; her clergy obviously constitute two distinct bodies, the friends and the enemies of evangelical truth. There is indeed a neutral territory between these two bodies, occupied by men of equivocal sentiments; but that there are two great parties in the Established Church none can doubt. When a new minister is introduced into a parish, the question in every one's mouth is (the phraseology varying according to the character of the interrogator,) Is he an evangelical? Does he preach the Gospel? The universal use of such questions in reference to the Established Clergy involves the existence of the important fact on which we are now animadverting, and proves, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that with regard even to the cardinal doctrine of the way of a sinner's acceptance in the sight of God, there prevails among the very teachers of the Establishment, "authorised and accredited" though they be, the very opposite of uniformity, absolute disagreement; and since both parties cannot be right, one of the two must be considered by the other to be chargeable with heresy, if not with schism. This view of the matter is confirmed by the fact, that ministers of the Establishment are not accustomed

to give to one another practical recognition of mutual confidence in each other's orthodoxy. It is by no means a matter of course for two neighbouring Rectors, though they meet at visitations, and exchange morning calls, to exchange pulpits. No; the one deems the other an enthusiast, and the latter considers the former to be an unenlightened man. Each, therefore, wishes to keep his flock from the contamination of doctrines so opposite to his own. These facts occur in every diocese, and almost in every deanery. Where, then, is the uniformity of the Establishment? In the Book of Common Prayer, and no where else.

We have spoken hitherto of the variety of opinion which prevails among different ministers, but the fact is, that the want of uniformity in the Establishment is apparent in a yet more revolting form. In many cases, the same minister, on the same day, and in the same service, differs from himself. The pulpit and the desk contradict each other. The only effectual method of ensuring outward uniformity would be to provide sermons as well as prayers for ministers, and to forbid the delivery of all others.

There actually is far more uniformity out of the Establishment than within it. The question, Does he preach the Gospel? is rarely asked respecting "accredited" ministers who are unconnected with the National Church. Either a Congregational or a Baptist minister, belonging to any one of the voluntary associations of ministers and churches which exist in all the provinces of Britain, is *presumed* to be both sound in doctrine in all essential particulars, and correct in life, and on this presumption is for the most part treated as a Christian brother and



as a brother minister, into whatever part of the country he goes, provided only that he be personally known. In fact, this intercourse between Christians, and this occasional exchange of pulpits, proceeds beyond the limit just described. Calvinistic Methodists, Scottish Presbyterians (in England,) and even Wesleyan Methodists, are accustomed thus to associate with one another. There are no doubt some considerable points of difference between the last-mentioned Christians and all the rest of the above-named denominations, but even among all these denominations, taken collectively, not excepting the last, far more uniformity prevails than exists in the Establishment. The members, with few exceptions, of all these denominations, allow that the members of all the other denominations, considered generally, are Christians, and that their ministers point out to the people the way to heaven. This is more than the two great parties in the Establishment are willing to allow of each other. The evangelical party contend, justly we think, that the ministers of the other party are "the blind leading the blind."

But if there be so much disagreement and so much heresy in "the church," and comparatively so little of either of these evils out of it, what becomes of the argument in favour of the Establishment, from its supposed efficacy in producing uniformity and preventing heresy?

Here let us notice the obvious unfairness of casting in the teeth of the whole body of Dissenters the singularities and oddities of particular sects. With equal propriety might Roman Catholics consider the whole body of Protestants, and the Church of England especially, as one of the most

prominent of Dissenters from the Roman Church, responsible for the absurd notions of some Protestant sects. The mere circumstance of any two parties being separate from a third party, does not necessarily blend those two parties into one, nor does it so connect them together as to make either responsible for the other.

But to return to the subject of uniformity, as it exists among separatists from the Establishment, excepting Unitarians, who can, in courtesy only, be called Christians, and a few other religionists, whose numbers altogether are insignificant, the various bodies of Christians are so far agreed in doctrine and practice, that they can and actually do recognise one another as Christians, not only in the anniversary meetings of religious institutions, but in meetings held for the express purpose of united worship.

When we contemplate any one body of Dissenters, we find the uniformity, as might be expected, more complete. The unity which subsists among Christians of the *Congregational* body, for example, became strikingly apparent in May, 1833, when the Congregational Union agreed unanimously in the adoption of a series of theological propositions, involving all essential and many subordinate points of doctrine and practice; and though this series of propositions was not adopted as necessarily, in every particular, the creed of every one of the body, but only as a declaration of the faith and order of the body generally, it is manifest that it does in fact contain the creed of the denomination at large, for otherwise the denomination at large would disapprove of its being considered a declaration of their faith and order.

Let an experiment be made in

the Church of England of the degree of uniformity which actually subsists among its members, by the Government, allowing a convocation of the bishops and clergy to assemble, with power to revise the Thirty-nine Articles, and to make such alterations as to their wisdom may seem meet. No, no; the Government and the heads of the Church know full well that such a convocation would bring to light the woeful disagreement which exists; and that since the uniformity of the Establishment is nothing but superficial, it is the part of prudence, (we speak not of honesty,) to keep the surface unbroken and entire.

If the true idea of schism be taken, rather from a rent in a building than from the erection

of another building, it is *within* rather than *without* the Church of England that schism prevails; and it may be remarked, by the way, that whatever evil consequences may follow from any number of Christians separating from a religious establishment, such evils must be placed to the account not of those who have conscientiously separated, but of those who, by their unscriptural rules and practices, compelled them to depart.

With such facts before our eyes, as have been detailed in this paper, who will attempt to persuade us that the Church by law established, is either a necessary or an efficient instrument for promoting uniformity, and for preventing heresy and schism?

#### THE RELIGIOUS CLAIMS OF THE BRITISH COLONIES.\*

AMONGST the many benefits which result from the ancient Monthly Lecture connected with the Associated Congregational Churches and Pastors in this metropolis, we cannot overlook the opportunity it supplies for the introduction to public notice of topics of great interest to our denomination, to society, and the world, and which are not likely to be brought under the observation of the religious public in the ordinary routine exercises of pastoral ministrations. We have reason to know that the individual who suggested "*The Religious Claims of the British Colonies*," as a suitable topic for a Monthly Lecture, has had his mind

long impressed with the importance of some combined missionary efforts in this country, on behalf of the colonial and territorial possessions of Great Britain; feeling that while it is a noble purpose to rescue Pagan nations from the bondage of idolatry, it is assuredly not less important, to preserve new and nominally Christian communities from sinking into atheism. The whole circle of Congregational ministers in the metropolis does not include a more able or eloquent preacher than Dr. Collyer, to whom that subject was assigned. The discourse he delivered was founded upon a most ingenious and happy adaptation of the language

\* *The Religious Claims of the British Colonies.* A Sermon preached at Jewin Street Chapel, before the Monthly Association of Congregational Churches and Pastors, on Thursday, April 10, 1834. By William Bengo Collyer, D.D. LL.D. &c. London, Svo. Westley and Davis, pp. 32.

of prophecy,\* respecting ancient Tyre to the circumstances and duties of England. Although this sermon is characterized by eloquent statements of general principles, yet we acknowledge with regret that it is defective in those facts and suggestions which prompt men to immediate and vigorous efforts. We shall therefore only quote from it a passage or two, on our national responsibility, and will then introduce some documents we have received, that will illustrate the religious necessities of some of the British Colonies in America and Asia, and which importunately request the zealous efforts of the British churches.

"It is not a figure of speech, but an astounding fact, such is the colonial sovereignty of Britain, that the sun never sets upon her dominion. If we could pierce the diameter of the globe, a part of her empire would be under our feet—her sceptre is extended over both hemispheres—and from whatever quarter the winds of heaven may blow, they fill the sails of her greatness, for they have swept over some portion of her possessions. The statesman may contemplate this prodigious dependence upon the crown of his country with unmixed emotions of pride and exultation—I see in it, primarily, the corresponding magnitude of national responsibility. The voice which rebukes the presumption of the individual, by the challenge, 'What hast thou, that thou hast not received?' in describing the position of Britain as shadowed forth in that of Tyre, 'Thy borders are in the midst of the seas—thy builders have perfected thy beauty;' 'Thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas:'—hath added, 'And I have set thee so.' Shall it be imagined that the responsibility of the individual rises in proportion to his ability; that 'to whom much is given, from him much shall be required;' and that a principle so just, so equitable, so necessary, shall not extend to a country? The principle cannot be controverted; let it then be brought to bear upon this highly-important subject. It is not territorial extent, abstractedly, that presents itself—our Colonies are not barren tracts, or

occupied by a population thinly scattered over a wide surface of country. In India, alone, one hundred millions of subjects have been added to the Parent State; and this is but *one*, although the greatest, of her present dependencies. I have said her *present* dependencies, because Australia is opening her bosom, as a new world, to receive her redundant population, who are winning cultivation from the waste and from the wild, from the forest and from the mountain; and driving the savage, from the precincts of civilization perpetually advancing, deeper into his native solitudes. It were superfluous here to recount the names and localities of her dominions. But it is of importance to call to mind, that the colonial territory of Britain has put under her responsibility, not only so many more bodies, but so many more souls—that it is not over inert matter, but over spirit and life that she rules—that a population vastly surpassing her own, is of equal value with her own—that one immortal spirit of all these millions is of more worth than the material universe, and must remain indestructible in happiness or misery, when the heavens are no more—and that the present, all-fluctuating, transient, uncertain existence, is the only period to fix its destiny irreversibly and for ever.

"Her responsibility is heightened by the moral state and condition of the inhabitants of that vast extent of territory over which she rules; and who, participating the depravity of a fallen nature common to all, present peculiarities of corruption or of destitution, characteristic of the particular circumstances in which they are respectively placed. The African, violently torn up from his native soil, or still rooted there, his faculties unroused and uncultivated, or repressed and debased, sunk in ignorance and abandoned to barbarism, discloses the fermentation of corrupt passions in forms of corresponding degradation. The Hindu, in possession of civilization—in the pride and boast of philosophy, has refined upon every thing, even upon sensuality—and has applied cultivation to produce greater abominations than the unprompted depravity of even a fallen nature would suggest—while he is enslaved by a superstition imposing more terrible bondage upon a large class of society than the tyranny of abused civil power has ever inflicted. The wrongs of the Negro vanish before those of the Sudra—depending upon the station in which he is born, and left without hope and without remedy. Taken, as it is imagined, from the feet of Brahma, he was created a slave to whom no master can give eman-

\* Ezekiel xxviii. 14—16.

elation—and of his condition no alleviation can be afforded. The very writings which are held to be sacred, he must not hear; and an attempt to listen to that in which he believes his salvation to consist, incurs the infliction of torture, or even of death; and thus by unparalleled cruelty exercised, not as the punishment of a crime, but as the visitation upon a condition, unexampled in other countries, the body is necessarily enslaved, and the soul abandoned to perish. Where is the 'covering cherub?' Shall not the outcast of India find shelter under the wing of Britain? and, ruined by the arbitrary distinctions of caste, be restored to the dignity of man, and elevated to the hope of the Christian? This is to be effected, not by physical force, but by moral influence—by imparting the knowledge of that system in which there 'is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but in Jesus Christ a new creature.' And this shall be done when the nation awakes to a sense of her responsibility, and with united effort scatters the blessings committed to her trust, in dependance upon His grace by whom they were bestowed upon herself; and,—like 'the angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,'—shall carry the boon to the remotest corners of the most distant provinces of the empire.

"The mode of colonization argues a considerable degree of responsibility, when it is considered in its strict usage, in reference to a body of people transferred from the parent state to some distant possession. It usually commences in the transportation of criminals unfit to be allowed in civilized society, whose laws they have broken, whose peace they have violated, whose order they have disturbed, and whose protection they have forfeited. These, for the most part, not incipient offenders, but hardened in guilt, and irreclaimable by milder methods of correction, carry with them all their vices superadded to the brand of infamy. Powerful restraints must be necessary, where former discipline has proved abortive: not in pity only to themselves, but in especial reference to those with whom they must come in contact, an imperative duty arises, to apply the most effective means to remove the contagion from among themselves, and to prevent the contamination of others. For not only the original inheritors of the soil are there to receive every baneful impression; but the overflowsings of a redun-

dant population pour in upon them, by spontaneous emigration from the mother-country. A state of society in which are necessarily commingled 'the precious and the vile,' the respectable and the debased, the virtuous and the vicious, the innocent and the criminal, requires no common guard, is to be influenced by no ordinary principles, and imposes upon the Parent State no small responsibility. Its religious claims are as urgent as they are indisputable. And to meet these, is to supply every essential want, and to furnish every necessary guard, to a population even so constituted: and nothing else will do it. If there be a doubt of the power and sufficiency of religion for so noble and mighty a purpose, we may well waive arguments to substitute facts; and an example is before you in one of the greatest and most prosperous countries on the face of the earth—emanating, too, from yourselves—it is to be seen in the United States of America. To her shores were banished the violators of the laws of God and of man, and in her were to be found the outcasts whom their native land had disowned. But persecution arose at home; and there went forth 'a holy seed,' voluntary exiles from the temples and the sepulchres of their fathers, that they might hold fast faith and a good conscience. These they carried, with their Bibles, their consistency, their righteous examples, their enlightened instructions, their inextinguishable love for civil and religious liberty, to a community so abandoned, and planted them in a soil so unpromising. Religion effected every thing—the moral waste became a spiritual garden. 'The wilderness and solitary place was glad because of them, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.' 'Instead of the thorn came up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier came up the myrtle-tree; it hath been to the Lord for a name, and shall be for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.'

We now introduce the communication to which we have referred from the Rev. Henry Wilkes, M.A., of Edinburgh.

*To the Editors.*—I take the liberty of transmitting for insertion in your valuable Magazine, should you see fit to grant them a place, several extracts from letters recently received from Canada. It may be presumed that the colonies so called will, ere long, attract more of the

attention of the British public than they have hitherto secured. The annual immigration, which is not only increasing in numerical amount, but yet more in the wealth and influence of the parties of which it is composed, cannot fail to diffuse among the resident population of this country, a growing interest in the welfare of that section of the empire. The natural resources and advantages of Canada are well nigh boundless; presenting a variety of inducements to the enterprising capitalist to attempt their development. Nor are such individuals backward to embrace the favourable openings thus afforded; on the contrary, a rapidly increasing number are directing their course thither. It is much to be lamented, however, that no corresponding effort has been made, or is now being put forth, to unfold to the people the "unsearchable riches of Christ."

At this hour, *one hundred and forty labourers* would find abundant employment and a noble harvest among the British, and nominally Protestant, inhabitants of Lower Canada, and this is exclusive of 450,000 French Roman Catholics. Upper Canada would afford employment to an equal number of faithful men, oppressed with a sense of the spiritual wants of the people. Mr. Miles and his fellow-labourers write in the most earnest manner, entreating the British Churches to send out missionaries of the Cross to their perishing countrymen.—Neither Mr. M. nor his fellows are indifferent to the efforts of other bodies of evangelical professing Christians, they most cordially bid them "God speed." But as those bodies are utterly incapable of occupying half that widely extended field, and as they consider ours a scriptural order of the kingdom of Christ, the desire is very naturally, and very properly, excited in their breasts,

to form Congregational Churches from among those who are "born again." They go forth preaching the Gospel—their grand aim is to save souls; but in subordination to this, they are anxious to gather the saints together, for the purpose of observing, in a scriptural manner, all the ordinances of Christ's house. They find scattered up and down through the country many persons, who have been members of Congregational Churches at home; and they are desirous of an arrangement, by which their spiritual wants may be supplied, as well as the salvation of the perishing earnestly sought.

Our brethren therefore ask, "Will not the Congregational Churches of England move in this matter? Would it not form a noble object upon which to concentrate the missionary energies of the Congregational Union of England and Wales? Shall tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of our countrymen perish in our colonies for lack of the means of grace, because we will not raise five or six hundred pounds annually, while we expend tens of thousands for the spiritual instruction of the heathen? Will the Congregational Churches stand aloof from a field, which is 'white already to harvest,' in which thousands of souls may be 'plucked as brands from the burning,' and upon which too, in connexion with the proclamation of the Gospel, there is free scope for the operation of their principles, and a certainty of their triumph, by the blessing of God?"

In that section of the country in which Mr. Murdoch labours, the oldest settlements exist, and there are more pecuniary means and less prejudice than in many other places. As a general fact, it may be stated, that from £25 to £30 per annum, for several years, supplied to a station from extraneous sources, would



be sufficient, in addition to the contributions of the people, for the support of a stated minister of the Gospel. Hence an immense amount of good might be effected, by a comparatively small sum of money. If you will permit me, I will attempt to supply your readers, in a subsequent number, with information more in detail. H. W.

*Extract from a Letter from the Rev. R. Miles, Montreal, to Mr. Wilkes.*

"Montreal, 29th Dec. 1833.

"If we could get some regular assistance from Britain, I feel persuaded we shall be able, under the divine blessing, to lay a foundation at least for extensive and permanent good to Canada. It is in your power, my dear brother, under God, to make some arrangement at home for this end, and I cannot but hope that you have been kept at home to effect this very important and necessary object. I will give you an outline of a plan that has occurred to me, which, if it were carried into effect, would, I think, well answer the purpose. Let there be a *Congregational Society* formed for supplying the British American Colonies with ministers, &c. call it, if you please, 'The Congregational Missionary Society for the British American Colonies.' Specify as its objects, sending out suitable ministers, aiding weak churches, and training up (in the Colonies) suitable young men for the ministry. Suitable young men, if required, might be sent out and receive their necessary education in the Colonies, where, as in Canada, it could be obtained; and thus they would be better fitted to enter upon the field of labour. A society for the Colonies at large (from which Canada would, of course, come in for its share of support) would obviate the objection against forming one for Canada exclusively, and thus requiring a *distinct* society for our different colonial possessions, where assistance was needed and solicited. It would also furnish a wider and more interesting field to engage the attention, and excite the energies of the British Churches. For a long time Canada, no doubt, would be the *chief* point that would engage the attention and solicit the assistance of such a society. From those parts where assistance was required and rendered, a regular correspondence should be kept up, and information should be largely and duly communicated to the British Chris-

tian public. The organs of such a society's operations in this country could be the 'Canada Education and Home Missionary Society,' for Lower Canada; and the 'Upper Canada Home Missionary and Education Society,' for the other province; or, if it were deemed necessary, a Montreal and another auxiliary could be formed for the purpose.

"I cannot but think that such a society, if brought out prominently before the Ministers and Churches at home, would meet with very general support. A very large sum is, of course, not required; and I have no doubt, that in a short time such a society, if systematically and efficiently conducted, would easily obtain the funds necessary for accomplishing an immense amount of good. The character of our denomination and the honour of our Churches demand some such measure as this. It is a reproach to our principles, and it is often thrown in my teeth, that the Independents in Britain are doing nothing, as a body, to establish and nourish their Churches in the Colonies, while all other denominations are actively employed in this work.—If Congregationalism be valuable and worthy of propagation in Britain, it must be equally so in Canada and other parts of the world. And who is to do the work, if the British Congregational Churches do not? Do try to provoke them to do their duty. It is too bad, that a few poor, solitary adventurers, like myself, should be left by the British Churches, alone and unaided, to do the work. I must again repeat to you, that it is of the highest importance that something be done at home to secure a regular and permanent source of sending some suitable men, and assisting, at least for a limited time, to support them after they arrive in this country. *Five or six hundred pounds* annually, in this way, for a few years, would accomplish great things for Canada, by the blessing of God, and what is this *trifle* among the British Churches. The men sent out should be liberal-minded, working men; we must not have *fine gentlemen*, nor imprudent men, sent to us.

"The head-quarters of such a society would probably be best in London, and its auxiliaries might be extended over the kingdom. These are points, however, that I must leave entirely to the decision of those who may be willing to sanction this plan, or to adopt any other which may be deemed better. This is now my *darling child*—I consign it to your care—take and nurse it for me, or rather for my Master, and you shall receive your wages."

*Extracts from a Letter from the Rev. D. Murdoch, Bath, Upper Canada. August, 1838.*

"So far as I have been enabled to judge, I consider this one of the best fields for forming and sustaining Christian churches. I have travelled up the whole of this beautiful bay (Quinte), and as far back as there are settlements, and I have uniformly found the people anxious to hear the Word of Truth. They deem it an honour to be visited, and show every kindness and hospitality in return. In all my journeyings, I have found every comfort I could have expected in circumstances so very different from those to which I had been accustomed. Besides outward advantages, I have what is far more important, good audiences whenever I appoint a meeting. Even now, although the time of harvest, and the weather hot, they will crowd a school-room in the middle of the day, at a very short notice."....."I have broken up more ground than I am able to bring under proper culture: more faithful men are therefore needed, such as come for the Gospel's sake, and love the souls of men."....."The prospects of ministers of the right stamp, who settle among their people, appear to me to be good even in a pecuniary point of view. So far as support is concerned, I feel prepared to throw myself upon the justice and liberality of the people. I have heard individuals make offers which would hardly be believed at home. One said to me, 'I will be responsible for three hundred dollars,' i. e. he would undertake to raise this sum in the neighbourhood. Another said he would give a house and 50 acres of land for the use of the minister; a third said he would give a house and a considerable piece of land. It would have been very difficult to have convinced me that all these things were true, before I came here; but now, satisfied of their truth, I would not hesitate a moment to go to any part of the country and throw myself upon the people."

To illustrate the wants of other British Colonies, and to show the necessity of some enlarged effort

on behalf of them generally, we shall insert a series of resolutions which we have just received from Van Diemen's Land, and which prove that such efforts ought to be undertaken, not to subserve the interests of party, but of souls.

At a Public Meeting held in the Independent Chapel, Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, January 12, 1834, William Gellibrand, Esq. J. P. in the Chair, it was resolved,—

1. That as the lamentable destitution of Christian instruction which exists in many parts of the Colony, more or less remote from the stations occupied by the clergy, ministers and catechists in the interior, constitutes a loud and urgent call to the friends of religion to take steps for the increased dissemination of Christian knowledge, this meeting do resolve, that a Society be now formed for that purpose, and that to be designated The Van Diemen's Land Home Missionary and Christian Instruction Society.

2. That the object of this Society be, to promote religion in the Colony, by engaging an ordained Minister or Ministers to itinerate in the interior, and by employing such other agency as may be available for the diffusion of Christian knowledge, both in Hobart Town and in the country.

[The 3d and 4th resolutions relate to the officers, &c.]

5. That so soon as sufficient funds are raised for defraying the expenses of a Minister's passage from England, and a prospect appears of support being afforded on his arrival, an application be made to the Rev. Dr. Burder, of Hackney; the Rev. J. Blackburn, of Pentonville; the Rev. J. Burnet, of Camberwell; and the Rev. Wm. Ellis, Foreign Secretary to the London Missionary Society, requesting them conjointly to select and engage, on behalf of this Society, an individual whom they may deem qualified to itinerate in this Colony.

We intend to resume this subject at an early opportunity.

#### TESTIMONIALS FOR OCCASIONAL COMMUNICANTS.

ALLOW me to bring before your readers a usage of our forefathers, which is too little regarded by the Churches in the present day, I

mean the practice of obtaining and requiring testimonials of church membership before individuals are admitted to the privilege of occa-

sional communion with a sister church. Such an observance, I have said, was common in the olden times, and some documents now before me will illustrate it. These papers relate to a Mrs. Hannah Wheeler, a Member of the Church at Ross, in Herefordshire, then, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Josiah Vaughan, who presided amongst that people for more than thirty-six years, and died August 27, 1764, aged 59. I have also the copy of a letter, which this worthy pastor addressed to Sergeant Wheeler and his wife, when at Yarmouth, dated 1753, which, however, has no present interest, except that he mentions the death of the Rev. Fowler Walker, of Abergavenny, and that the Rev. Mr. Seddon was still living at Hereford, notices which may be interesting to some collectors.

As this worthy woman was the wife of a non-commissioned officer of Dragoons, she accompanied her husband to the various towns of the kingdom, where his regiment was quartered. The testimonial of her pastor is not preserved, but the following were granted her by respectable ministers to whom she had been introduced by that document, and which illustrate the usage of our Churches at that period.

*"Westbury, May 23, 1747.*

"The providence of God having called the bearer hereof, Hannah Wheeler, to her husband, Sergeant of Dragoons, in quarters at Warrington, and she being desirous to enjoy the benefit of all ordinances wherever it is her lot to reside, as she has done with us for several years, this is to certify whom it may concern, that during her communion with us, she has, to the best of our knowledge, walked so as to adorn the doctrine of God in all things, and as such

I recommend her with hearty prayers for her growth in grace, who am an unworthy brother and servant in the labour of the Gospel.

*"MILES BAXTER, Pastor."*

*"Great Yarmouth, Norfolk,  
Oct. 22, 1753.*

"These are to certify whom it may concern, that Mrs. Wheeler has been about a year at Yarmouth, and attended my ministry stately, and upon the recommendation of the Rev. Messrs. Baxter and Vaughan, was admitted to church communion with us, and her behaviour has been agreeable to the sacred profession, and, accordingly, I recommend her to sacramental communion in those churches where divine providence shall cast her lost.

*"RICHARD FROST."*

Now, I venture to suggest to the pastors and officers of our churches, the importance of uniformly requiring such documents of those who apply for occasional communion. This practice would impress the minds of all parties with the importance of their Christian character, and would greatly controul that religious vagrancy, by the toleration of which many enjoy for years the right of sacramental and even church communion, without standing in actual relation to any church, and who are, therefore, free from all ecclesiastical cognizance of their moral deportment. Much as we have cause to be thankful for the general purity of our fellowship, I am persuaded, that a higher degree of consistency might be secured if the affairs of our churches were uniformly administered with a greater regard to that order which the New Testament sanctions, and the usages of our forefathers commend.

*Z. Z.*

## REVIEW OF BOOKS.

*Domestic Portraiture; or, the successful Application of Religious Principles in the Education of a Family, exemplified in the Memoirs of three of the deceased Children of the Rev. Legh Richmond. Seeley and Burnside. 8vo. pp. 406.*

THIS is a most delightful book; an invaluable addition to the aids and encouragements, so greatly needed and so greatly prized by devout parents, while anxiously training up their children in the fear of God. There is every thing to recommend it to the favour of the public, and to secure for it a wide circulation, and a lasting usefulness. It records the domestic habits and labours, anxieties and successes of one of the most interesting and beloved names in which the church of Christ, in recent times, without distinction of party, rejoices. It relates to one of the most important practical topics to which the Christian mind can direct its inquiries, and the Christian heart its sympathies,—the successful godly training of a family. It presents the practice of that most eminent man with its results, on this great point of parental duty, in the form of three narratives, as touching as they are instructive. Here is a book illustrative of the fact how much truth exceeds fiction in pathos, interest, instruction—a book for moving our best sympathies and cultivating our best affections, as well as for affording the best lessons of practical wisdom, worth all the religious fictions of the present century. And if it be possible that any thing can raise the memory of Legh Richmond to a higher place in the affectionate esteem of

N. S. NO. 115.

the Christian world, while it adds to his posthumous usefulness as much as to his lasting honour, this book will certainly have that effect. It shows how universally he was under the influence of Christian principle, and in how lovely a manner in him the feelings of natural tenderness and affection were consecrated by divine grace. And if any reader should doubt whether these holy purposes and feelings were always guided by adequate wisdom, the mistakes of a man who erred, where any may deem him in error, from the very intenseness and elevation of his Christian views and aims, may be more instructive and awakening than even the excellencies of common men.

The public are deeply indebted to the able editor of this book for the very successful manner in which he has executed a task equally delicate and important. He has given a most graphic picture of Turvey Rectory, and its interesting inmates. The spirit of all his observations, and of the narrative by which he weaves the facts and documents into a continuous record, is in perfect harmony with that lovely domestic scene, the portraiture of which he has presented to the public.

The following passage brings before us that great rule which it was the business of Mr. Richmond's life, in the training of his children, to reduce to practice:—

"The principal characteristic, however, of his mode of education, was the piety infused into every employment or pleasure. Whether in the field, or in

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the museum,—whether he examined what was beautiful to the eye, or indulged in what was harmonious to the ear,—whether he made an experiment, or related an event, every thing was connected in his own mind, and in that of his children, with Him who giveth all things richly to enjoy:—every thing afforded him an illustration of some religious truth, or was employed to inspire some devout affection.”—p. 27.

Nothing can be more certain, from the whole narrative of this *Domestic Portraiture*, than that it was the incessant, laborious, yet delightful care of Mr. Richmond, to carry this principle into practical, successful application. And it is only by this maxim, thus applied, that success in the religious education of a family can be reasonably anticipated. Perfect wisdom in the subordinate rules and details of domestic discipline, founded on this primary basis, cannot of course be expected of erring man; and sometimes the efficacy of the principle may be checked, and the results it would otherwise work out may be, frustrated by mistakes in its application; but the principle is itself indispensable, and is of such virtue, that, with the divine blessing, it cannot but exert its energy and lodge its lasting witness in the consciences of children, even under management where the defects and errors are far from inconsiderable. Not that details and minor regulations are to be disregarded. They rise into importance from their association with great principles and eternal interests, and from their power to influence both. In this excellent book the reader will find the recorded sentiments and practices of Legh Richmond, as well as some interesting discussions of the editor, on many of the most important practical questions connected with the religious education of the young. Amusements, associations, punishments, the relative advantages of private

and public education, pass successively under the notice of the reader, in a form that will amply repay his most attentive consideration, whether he concludes by admiring the wisdom, or detecting the supposed errors of so holy a man, so affectionate a father, as Legh Richmond. He who should avow that he had read these interesting details without advantage, would pronounce a most serious imputation on his own understanding and heart, for in domestic affairs these are so nearly allied, that he will make little advance in wisdom whose affections are not moved in the same proportion that his mind is informed; and in training the young, love is as necessary to sweeten wisdom, as is wisdom to direct love.

The history of these three children of so excellent a father would seem, as it were, ordered by Providence with the express design of furnishing illustrations of the results of Mr. Richmond's admirable parental tuition, in a form the most interesting and impressive for the extensive and lasting benefit of the church of Christ. The early follies of Nugent—his consequent seafaring life—his ingenuous, affectionate penitence—his intended return, full of the tenderest regard to his honoured parents, and bearing with him the tokens of his love and pledges of his fond attachments, frustrated by shipwreck and death; the wasting sickness of Wilberforce, during which full opportunity was afforded for the gradual and complete development of his great mental powers and intense affections, in connection with all the reasonings, and struggles, and joys of his striking conversion; the affecting death in puerperal fever of a daughter on the birth of her second babe, during which short scene of intense distress, the light and power, till



then too dormant in her mind, communicated in a godly education, exerted their energy under the quickening impulse of grace to her eternal salvation: these varied instances, full of interest so deep and tender, carry with them instruction and encouragement as varied and as affecting to the mind of every pious parent, amidst all the toils, and fears, and hopes connected with compliance with that inspired maxim, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

It is impossible as it is unnecessary, that we should enter upon a discussion of any of those important principles and maxims on which religious education should be grounded, and by which it should be directed. There is, however, one observation of the excellent editor, in the truth and wisdom of which we so entirely concur, and which is of so great practical importance, that we cannot forbear extracting it for the thoughtful consideration of all our readers, adding the expression of our earnest hope, that every reader of our pages will be also the student of this most instructive, most interesting book.

"Yet some caution is necessary in the exclusive application of strictly religious principles. There are a variety of motives which act most salutarily on present advantage, and which impose powerful restraints on the impulses of a corrupt nature; and if we strip a youth of all regard for his interest or reputation, we expose him, in the absence of higher motives, to be driven along by the current of his own passions, till he makes shipwreck of all that is valuable for this world and the next. To this neglect of inferior motives I am disposed to ascribe the misconduct of many children of religious parents; and it, therefore, becomes an inquiry of no small importance (though of difficult and delicate character), whether the entire disuse of subordinate influences is, or even safe, in a course of education."

Surely it is not. Such an education is seriously defective. In our godly families the solemn application of religious motives should not be lowered or diminished, but a greater care of morals and manners, of proprieties and prudential habits should be added. We should unite the Proverbs of Solomon with the Epistles of Paul. We should make a sanctified use of many views which, as substituted by worldly men for religion, deceive and ruin souls; but which, as added by pious men to religion, would help to secure and adorn it: and where higher principles are unhappily wanting, would still supply some security against failure of character, by which the grey hairs of many a holy father and mother have been brought down with sorrow to the grave, and the lips of scoffers supplied with many an envenomed reproach against evangelical religion.

We are happy to announce that another and cheaper edition of this work has appeared in the series of the *Christian's Family Library*, edited by the Rev. E. Bickersteth, to which he has prefixed some valuable introductory remarks.

*The Extent of the Atonement, in its relation to God and the Universe.* By Thomas W. Jenkyn. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co. 12mo. pp. 464. 1833.

THIS is a plain, lucid, and scriptural book on the doctrine of the Atonement. It is written in a style of uniform simplicity, level to every capacity, and in a spirit worthy of the subject, and incapable of giving offence to even the most captious controversialist.

The doctrine of the Atonement is the key-stone in the arch of revelation, the displacing of which would involve the whole fabric in desolation and ruin; the sun in the

system of Christian truth attracting every thing to itself, and binding the system together by sweetest influences, and in the most beautiful harmony; shedding light on every doctrine, enforcing every precept, and solving every difficult phenomenon of divine dispensations. The religion of every age, and we may add of every country, has distinctly recognized the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice; and the experience of all who have known the truth, and been taught of God, is summed up in this, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." It was indeed gradually revealed unto men, and their faith in it was more or less vigorous according to the degree of light which they enjoyed; but pardon has never flowed through any other medium, nor availing hopes of heaven rested on any other basis. If this doctrine has been treated with contempt, it has been only by the hardened and thoughtless, who have madly pursued the path to ruin in utter recklessness of the issue. If it has met with opposition from professed students of religious truth, it has been in the cases of men whose hearts were unaffected with the evil of sin, and who had, therefore, no sympathy with the great moral claims of the divine government, and the immortal welfare of the universe. If it has been esteemed of slight importance by some, whose sincerity in religious inquiry could not be altogether denied, it has been either because the divine authority of the Scriptures was not fully acknowledged, or because their essential properties were strangely overlooked.

The controversy which has prevailed, and which, alas! in some quarters still prevails, on the *Extent* of the Atonement, may be chiefly referred into one or the other of

these two sources—mistaken views as to the nature of the atonement, and a disposition to systematize rather than believe in the study of revealed truth.

The history of the world is itself a proof that the Atonement is something more than a provision for the actual salvation of a certain number of sinful men. It does supply the provision, and the only provision, of human salvation, and this is its highest and fullest result, and the extent of the benefit is in this respect limited to those who are saved; the question, whether they be many or few, fore-ordained or otherwise, belongs not to this place, as it affects not this fact. But there are many other features of the divine government, as exercised towards fallen men, which are altogether irreconcilable with any known principles of justice, if the Atonement have not a more general aspect; nay, if it do not exert a universal influence. The natural course of justice towards offenders is obviously that which was pursued in the case of the angels that sinned; immediate and irretrievable punishment. None will surely charge on God an undue severity in the case of the first transgressors. Why, then, is man spared? And how is it that mercy meets him on every hand, and that prospects of entire escape from the just desert of sin are held out to him in the volume of inspiration? It is admitted that God was not unjust towards the angels that sinned; it will be equally admitted that God is just in these exercises and overtures of mercy to men. Is there then any ground of justification, save that which the atonement of Christ presents? There cannot be more gratuitous mercy with the perfectly holy God. If there be any other medium of his mercy than that which the vicarious sacrifice

of his incarnate Son presents, let it be pointed out. But if it be true, that *all* the mercy of God to sinners flows through Christ, and through him alone, then is it true that the Atonement is not properly defined when it is described as a mere provision for the salvation of the elect. It must necessarily be viewed as a general basis on which to found the exercises of divine mercy, and as such is capable, if its value be adequate, of the greatest diversity of application which the gracious purposes of the Sovereign may suggest; and that its value is adequate must be admitted by all who acknowledge the infinite dignity of the sacrificial victim.

The entire absence from the Word of God of every thing like system, is not without design. God has made known his will as it pleased him. The mode he has adopted doubtless displays his supremacy, but it also displays his wisdom and benevolence. Every correct view of his glory compels us to admit that the mode is the best that could be adopted; the one most fitted to secure the practical ends contemplated by the revelation. The language employed too is fitly chosen; and as the Bible is designed for the world, and not for a small and privileged fraction of its inhabitants, for the poor and illiterate equally with the learned and the honourable, its obvious meaning will generally be found to be the true one. If statements are made universal, they are to be so taken; if particular and limited, they are to be so understood. And if it happen that on one and the same topic both kinds of statement occur, it is plain that the limited may be quite compatible with the more general views, on the common principle that a part is put for the whole, and especially where the selection is made of the

most important part of a general result. And farther, if it should, to our feeble understandings, be difficult to point out the reconciling medium, if it ever should be impossible to show how two apparently opposite views of the same thing, *e. g.* the extent of the Atonement, are compatible with each other; it is surely both holier and wiser to confess our ignorance, and to believe that both classes of statement are correct, and are to be interpreted in their fair and obvious meaning, than to attempt to found a system which shall be exclusively based on the one or the other of these apparently disagreeing views, according as our minds may lean towards the restrictive or the extensive sense. The view just presented of the nature of the Atonement, does, we think, solve this problem, and furnish a most natural, reasonable, and satisfactory view of the case. But irrespective altogether of this principle, and with all due regard to the importance of systematic views of truth, and we do not lightly esteem them, we cannot but think that if preachers of the Gospel had unhesitatingly imbibed the spirit of revelation, *now* urging its universal appeals, and *now* elucidating its particular application, regardless as the Bible itself is of the seeming discrepancy; if they had at one time preached Christ as "tasting death for every man," and at another as giving his "life for the sheep;" and if readers of the word had acted in the same way, *now* believing that "God is the Saviour of all men," and *now* that he is "especially so of them that believe," this controverted point had long ago been practically settled.

The whole question is fully and fairly gone into in this volume, and we proceed to lay before our readers a general view of its contents.

Our author's first chapter is on the nature and design of the Atonement. In reply to the question, What is an Atonement? he says, "ATONEMENT is an expedient substituted in the place of the literal infliction of the threatened penalty, so as to supply to the government just and good grounds for dispensing favours to an offender. Let this definition of Atonement" he proceeds, "be fairly tried by the usage of the word in the administration of civil justice; and let it be compared with the sense of all the passages of Holy Scripture, in which the word, or the doctrine of the Atonement is introduced. It will not wrest one text of scripture, it will not torture one doctrine of Christian Theology," p. 3: We regard this paragraph as furnishing a sound and satisfactory view of the case;—a view of the case required by the existing phenomena of the divine government, and borne out by the most careful study of the subject as it is put forth in the Bible itself. "Except in the mere article of dying," (remarks Mr. J. at p. 40.) "of separation between soul and body, there was scarcely any thing in the sufferings of Christ the same with the original penalty threatened in the law. In the sufferings of Christ there was no pang of remorse, no consciousness of demerit, no moral and eternal death, no execration of the authority that inflicted the pains. On the contrary, there was in him a consciousness that he was JUST, and that the law did not curse him, and an assurance that God approved of him in his sufferings, as obeying his will, and doing his pleasure."

"The hypothesis (it is added) of a literal infliction of the penalty on the person of Christ, destroys the benevolence and weakens the authority of the divine government.

It supposes that the divine government would not admit of any diminution of misery, or any accession of happiness in the universe. It *must* have every iota and tittle of the misery incurred, whether, by the person of the offender himself, or by his substitute. It supposes that the penalty cannot with justice be executed again on the offender himself, after it has been inflicted and exhausted on his substitute. Such views make the offender secure, presumptuous, and licentious. The substitutionary Atonement of Christ does not abrogate a single claim of the law upon any sinner, until that sinner believes in Christ, and walks "not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit."

We are anxious to gain the attention of our readers very fully to this part of the inquiry. Let the nature of the Atonement be clearly understood, and the question of its extent is easily settled. Every impartial mind must feel that no definition of it is accurate which does not allow us to range under it, and explain according to it, *all* the diversified features and operations of the divine government, which being merciful, require, because they are merciful, to be preferred to its meritorious influence. Admit that the Atonement is an illustrious expedient suggested by the benevolence, arranged by the wisdom, and appointed by the authority of the great Supreme, "to declare his righteousness" in the exercises of his mercy, and we have no difficulty in explaining how it is that sinners, even the non-elect, are spared in existence, surrounded with mercies, invited to return to God, and assured of pardon and peace on their believing in Christ; whilst the sovereign provision of gracious influence to regenerate and save the elect, is still seen to depend on the

same arrangement, and to derive its validity from the same sacrifice,—and comes in, when all moral means, even under the Gospel, have been shown to be ineffectual to lead men to repentance without the grace of God, to crown all his mercy, and shed the most illustrious glory on the whole scheme. This view of Atonement abates nothing of the importance which pertains to the sovereignty of divine grace, and the actual salvation of the chosen people. It abates nothing of the importance of these declarations of inspired truth which speak of the special application and design of the Atonement. It abates nothing of the consolation which is suggested to the believing mind by the thought that the Son of God in the obedience which, as a mediator, he rendered to the divine will, had his eye specially fixed on those whom God had given him, and his heart determinately set upon their salvation. On the contrary, it places all these particular views of the design and application of the Atonement in a more prominent point of light; it most fully proclaims the inveteracy of our depravity, by showing that it is unconquerable by any thing but omnipotent grace; and it gives a lustre to the interpositions of that grace which they cannot enjoy if viewed in any other connection. We had selected several passages for quotation illustrative of these several points; but must content ourselves with the following, on “The Influence of the Atonement on the Interests of the Church.” It is from the author's 12th chapter, and we prefer to give one entire, rather than take a number of detached passages:—

“The atonement of the Son of God for sin, is the ground for calling a CHURCH out of the midst of mankind. This is one why Jesus Christ, in his mediatorial character, is called the ‘foun-

dation’ of the church. The first stones of the church of God were built on the promise of the ‘seed of the woman,’ and on this every succeeding stone has been placed. This is the ground of the general call of the Gospel: and what a sure foundation it is for a minister to stand upon, to beseech all men to be reconciled to God! On this the Prophets and Apostles, and all wise master-builders, have placed the living materials of the ‘church of the Lord.’

“The ministry of the atonement is the great instrument for collecting the church. Unto Christ the gathering of the people is to be. Something else may gather a sect of philosophers, or bands of philanthropists; but it is this alone which will gather a church. ‘And I, if I be lifted up, I will draw all (men) to myself.’ It is emphatically called the word and ministry of reconciliation. It is the trumpet of jubilee that answers the acceptable year of the Lord, and calls back to their home and their inheritance, the captives and those that are ready to perish.

“This doctrine has always been in the church. When Adam, and Eve, and Abel formed the first members of the Church, the doctrine of the atonement was a cardinal article of its creed. In the Church there was never known any way of acceptance with God but through an atonement. Whatever the Church lost in seasons of afflictions and defeats, it has never entirely lost the doctrine of the atonement. Its outlines, from behind the dim transparency of ceremonial shadows, never entirely faded away from the vision of the Jewish church, and in the Christian church the ordinance of the Lord's Supper has been a plain and imperishable emblem of the atonement, to show forth the Lord's death till he come. Though the emblem has been criminally shrouded from the people in the dark foldings of superstition, or, at another time, shamefully exhibited to the populace in a mantle of state trappings; yet the doctrine itself has never quitted the Christian temple. Ecclesiastical history proves, that in the precise proportion that any church becomes erroneous on the doctrine of the atonement, that church, whether in Rome or in England, among Episcopalians or Dissenters, becomes corrupt. It is also capable of proof, on which no entrance can be made now, that a church that *denies* the atonement of Christ is not a church of his.

“The provisions of the atonement have a special reference to the well-being, the purity, the perpetuity, and the glory of the church. The general provisions of



the atonement give the Mediator power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him, and constitute him 'Head over ALL THINGS,' with speciality of application, 'to the church.' To the church, all the provisions of the atonement, like the arrangements of nature and providence, work together for good.

"All the services of the church have a direct reference to the atonement. No service in the Christian temple is acceptable to God, but that which is offered through the hands of the 'minister of the sanctuary.' The prayers of the church take Calvary in their way to heaven. In singing with grace in the heart, the heart must be tuned for the 'song of the Lamb' at the foot of the cross. It disowns all preaching but 'the preaching of the cross.' The church is baptised into the death of Christ as an atonement for sin, and in the Lord's supper it sits to the feast of the atonement.

"The atonement will be the theme of the church for ever and ever. In heaven not a note will be sounded but in harmony with 'the BLOOD that speaketh better things. The burden of the song will be 'UNTO HIM that hath loved us, and WASHED us from our sins in his own blood.' The harp of Saul of Tarsus will send forth a sound which the harp of Gabriel does not reach, and a throng of ransomed sinners will for ever swell the strain, 'washed us from our sins,' and the sounds of the harpers harping will thrill eternity into melody and praise."—pp. 422—424.

We regret that our space forbids our going at greater length into the important subject of this treatise. We sincerely thank our esteemed friend for his book, and commend it to the serious attention of our readers. On some minor points of his argument we might not entirely agree with him, nor do we think that he has always succeeded in selecting the best modes of expression; but the volume, as a whole, will be found to present a luminous view of the sentiments entertained by our body generally, or the doctrine discussed; it deserves the attentive study of both the Hyper-Calvinist, and the Arminian. The following are the heads of our author's chapters; they will suggest

a general idea of the comprehensive view which he has taken of his subject:—

"The Nature and Design of the Atonement. The Atonement in its relation to the Person of the Son of God; to the Perfections of God; to the Purposes of God; to the Works of God; to divine moral Government; to the Providence of God; to the whole System of Divine Truth; to Sin; to the Salvation of the Human Race; to the Work of the Holy Spirit; to the Church; to the various Dispensations of revealed Religion; to the Eternal State of the Universe; and on the Moral Grandeur of the doctrine of the Atonement."

*Liturgica: a Course of Nine Lectures on the Liturgy of the Church of England. By the Rev. John Ayre, A.M. of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, Curate of Edmonton, and Domestic Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Earl of Roden.* 18mo. pp. 285. Seeley and Co. London.

THIS small volume is inscribed to the Earl of Roden. It consists of nine Discourses, delivered in the parish Church of Edmonton, in the winter of 1830-1. They are intended to explain, in a simple and familiar manner, the daily service of the Established Church. Notes, occupying nearly one-third of the volume, are appended. These are chiefly controversial. We are, indeed, taught in the preface, by certain references, what we have to expect before we finish the perusal of the book. The following passage may serve to prepare us for the conflict.

"The author has availed himself of the assistance of several earlier labourers in the same field. He is indebted chiefly to the 'judicious Hooker;' he is indebted also to Shepherd and Nicholls on the Common Prayer; to L'Estrange on the Alliance of Divine Offices; to Wilks's Correlative Claims and Duties; to Caewood's Church of England and Dissent; and to some other works."

There is no acknowledgment of obligation to the Holy Scriptures for affording aid in this warfare,

are we to presume that no thanks were due?

The Lectures are on the following topics.

*Lecture 1. On the expediency of a prescript Form of Prayer. 2. On the confession of sin. 3. On the ascription of Praise. 4. On the authority of the Scripture. 5. On the character and confession of saving Faith. 6. On the character of Prayer. 7. On the encouragements to Prayer. 8. On the establishment of the Law through Faith. 9. Concluding Admonitions.*

It would surely have been much better for the author to have kept the practical and devotional part of his Lectures separate from the controversial. His views on the latter might have been thrown into the preface, or confined to an appendix of notes. It appears to us quite out of character, and a sad violation of correct taste, to blend the confession of the sinner and his reconciliation to God by prayer, faith, and the atoning sacrifice of Christ, with contests about forms of worship, their ceremonies, and their details. We should not have made these remarks, had not the author designated his Lectures "*Devotional explanations of the liturgical services*," p. 2, and "*disclaimed a controversial spirit*," p. 3. He is, however, quite as well aware as we are, that a vast difference exists between the verbal renunciation of a disposition, and its actual rejection. The former without the latter are only so many empty sounds. But there is one feature in the character of his first lecture which has given us much more pain than any thing of a controversial kind which the volume presents. It is the salvo at the 19th page, and the rhetorical flourish with which the lecture concludes. The warnings in the 18th page are faithful; but when "the children of the church,

N.S. NO. 115.

sealed with her seal, and tendered with her care," are told, notwithstanding the warnings which had been just before uttered, (warnings which the preacher must know are imperatively called for in every mixed congregation,) that "he hopes better things of them, and things that accompany salvation," how evident is it that he destroys that which he sought to build, and sends away the whole assembly consoled with the conviction (we use his own language) that "their strength is perfect weakness;" but yet that "God's spirit helps their infirmities," that "Christ ever lives to make intercession for them, and that through him, their petitions shall be effectual, and grace, mercy, and peace shall be multiplied to them; and that ere long, they shall be translated from the church on earth to the church in Heaven." This is worse than injudicious: it is positively injurious. It is what might have been expected from a bigotted formalist, who thinks there is no salvation out of his own pale, and certain salvation within the favoured inclosure; but it is not what we expected from the curate of Edmonton. As to the special pleading in this lecture on behalf of a liturgical mode of worship, we suggest to the controversialist the propriety of perusing a Discourse by one John Pye Smith, D.D., on the "*Comparative Advantages of prescribed Forms and Free Prayer*." It may not, perhaps, convince him of the superiority of the latter to the former; but it may serve to show him the difference between special pleading and enlarged and candid discussion. It would be well for him also to recollect, while he appeals to the "*Church of England and Dissent*," of the Rev. J. Cawood, A.M., of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, and perpetual curate of Bewdley, that there is a certain

small volume entitled, "Dissent and the Church of England," by one John Augell James, to whose authority we find an appeal, in note B, pp. 204-5, of this volume.

Instead of following the author through the thorny paths of controversy, we choose rather to leave those topics, in the consideration of which he perplexes, we fear, both himself and them that hear him, for others, in the statement and illustration of which he evinces his accurate views of the state of human nature, of the character of God, and of the grounds and means of our common salvation. The following remarks, only substituting the words "true Christian" for "true Churchman," will commend themselves to the mind and heart of every pious individual who peruses them. The passage is addressed to those who pride themselves on being churchmen, and who think that designation a sufficient proof of God's favourable acceptance of them.

"Brethren, this is just the spirit which our Lord reproveth in the carnal Jews, whose boast was, that they were 'Abraham's seed': and the Apostle Paul, in reference to the same imagination, assures us, that 'he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.'" It is indeed a blessed privilege to be reared in the bosom of a pure and apostolical church, to be presented by her hands, in our infancy, to Christ, and to be nurtured by her discipline in the fear and admonition of the Lord: but it is a privilege which entails a corresponding responsibility. And if you say that you are churchmen, I shall ask you to prove the truth of your profession by your fruits. A true churchman is a humbled, broken hearted penitent for his transgressions, 'the remembrance of' whose sins 'is grievous to him, and the burden of them intolerable'; if this be not your character, do not assume a name to which you have no title. A true churchman is one who with the

heart hath believed in Jesus unto righteousness, and with the mouth hath made confession to salvation: if this be not really your character, why do you claim an appellation which does not belong to you? A true churchman is one whose heart is joyful in the Lord, who hath forgiven his iniquity, and crowned him with tender mercies, and with his lips he would ever be telling the honour of his God; he is one who takes the scripture as his guide and his counsellor, whose 'delight is in the law of the Lord'; and who hath known and enjoyed communion with his Father in heaven. If this be not the experience of your heart, and the tenor of your life,—you may say you are members of the Church, but I fear (I know) you are not her faithful children. Be assured that no outward union, but the inward spiritual tie of faith in Jesus only, will point you out as the purchased possession of the Lord, 'in the day when he shall make up his jewels.'

*Si sic omnia:* Most happy shall we be to meet with our author again on common ground. But we had much rather avoid an encounter on that which is debateable; not because we fear him as a polemic, but because we love him as a Christian, and as a fellow-labourer in promoting the same glorious end, by a different, though as they appear to us, an objectionable order of means.

*Church Rates lawful, but not always expedient: A Sermon, preached at St. Mary's, Bilston, October 6, 1833, at a Collection towards defraying Expenses usually paid out of the Church Rate. By the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, M. A. Vicar of Sedgely, Staffordshire. Bro. pp. 24. London, Hatchard.*

THE author of this Sermon is a man, who on all important points is of a kindred spirit with the author of the "Liturgica." We are so bold as to say that we had much rather meet the former in controversy than the latter, not because he is inferior either in capacity or power; but because he is evidently more disposed, if not more capable, to take a comprehensive view of a disputed point. We are at perfect ease

when we differ from him. There is a calmness, a frankness, a generosity in the expression of his sentiments, which assures us that an objection will not irritate him, and that a confutation of some argument which he has carefully constructed and forcibly expressed, will neither confuse his mind nor painfully affect his feelings. In truth, Charles Girdlestone is no common man. We have the evidence before us.

"Having been invited to preach in behalf of the fund which you are raising to supply the place of a Church Rate, I have anxiously desired to select a subject and to treat of it in a manner which may conduce to the increase of good-will and peace among the conflicting sects of Christians. That in this life we shall never be all of one mind, may indeed be very justly apprehended. But this affords no sufficient reason for not trying to become so. We must aim at more than we hope to reach. And considering the force of our inborn propensity to evil, such endeavours would have no slight encouragement, if they should prevent us from growing daily more corrupt in our lives, or more estranged from each other in our hearts."

The spirit displayed in the above short extract, is calculated to do more for the Established Church of these realms, than all the controversial charges and visitation sermons that have been pronounced and printed. And again, the author having stated that there are two matters most closely connected with each other, "the reconciliation of the Church with the Dissenters and the reform of the Church itself," adds.

"And yet some of us may live to see the day when these most important questions, reviewed with sober judgment, discussed with charitable temper, and settled in the fear of God, and out of love for Christ, shall help largely towards the prevalence of the Gospel in the world, and towards its influence in the hearts of professed believers. Let the Church but honestly confess its real abuses. Let it earnestly endeavour to supply its obvious defects. Let it be ready, in things that

are indifferent, to concede somewhat to the prejudice of its opponents."

Now though we entertain no sanguine expectations that the Church of England will ever undergo such a change as to comprehend within the embrace of its enlarged charity, "the most able and pious ministers" from among the Dissenters, yet, if any change could produce such a result, it must be one wrought by men of a kindred spirit with the author of "Church Rates lawful, but not always expedient."

We are far from concurring with the writer in all his statements. There is not a little confusion of thought in some of them. He argues the obligation of church rates, from the fact that, "*our church most truly sowed to you spiritual things at the Reformation.*" But this would only prove that church rates ought to be paid to the reformers. We presume they make no claim of the kind at the present day; nor have we ascertained that they have left any heirs, administrators, or assigns, for the permanent receipt of the obnoxious levy. He argues the right of the church to rates, from *the circumstance of its being established by law.* "We are to render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;" and "to be subject to the powers that be." But this argument, if it prove any thing, will prove, that we ought to support any system of religious belief, from the boldest theism to the highest supralapsarianism, through all the grades of Judaism, Christianity, Islamism, Hindooism, and the infinitely varied forms of the grossest paganism, provided they be established by the law of that land on whose soil we tread. We do not hold the absurd opinion that "truth, integrity, humanity, fidelity to our marriage vows," are to be dissented

from because they have received the sanction of the law: and if the respected author will trouble himself to separate the idea of Christianity as embodied (we do not say misrepresented) in the Episcopal Church, as by law established in these realms, from Christianity as it exists in the New Testament, and lives, breathes, and acts in the conduct of its consistent professors, he will discover that it is not Christianity, properly so called, nor the church of Christ, composed as that church is of "faithful men," from which we dissent, but from a church in which he acknowledges there are "real abuses," and "obvious defects."

p. 4.

But the author adds another reason to induce the payment of church rates, "*the divine authority of the church.*" "*Its establishment by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*"

The author must be aware that this is begging the question. If he mean that the Church of England is of divine authority, and established by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to the exclusion of all such authority in the case of every other church, he assumes that which he would be the very first to condemn in the Church of Rome. And if he admit, that other churches have a scriptural (for this, from his own

explanation, is what he means by a divine, authority) why urge upon the members of one church the support of another? He has himself condemned this in another published sermon, and if the members of the Episcopal Church are not to contribute towards the support of the Wesleyan, the Independent, or the chapels of any other denomination, on what grounds of reason or justice can these parties be compelled, or even strongly urged to contribute towards the Establishment. While the author claims church rates as a right, he appears willing, on the ground of avoiding offence, entirely to give up the claim. We only add, that we admire Mr. Girdlestone's spirit, though we cannot praise him for his logic. Let it be granted that Episcopacy, as by law established, is of divine right, and he is an admirable dialectician; deny it, or prove that it has no such right, and all his arguments, both for Church-rates and for the Church they are designed to support, fall to the ground. We cannot persuade ourselves that the Rev. Charles Daubeny's foundation would be selected by the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, as adapted to bear the weight of the latter gentleman's arguments.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS, WITH SHORT NOTICES.

*The Christian Minister put in Remembrance to stir up the Gift within him. A Charge delivered at the Settlement of the Rev. Luke Forster, as Pastor of the Independent Church, Saffron Walden. By John Ely. Sec. pp. 57. London: Westley and Davis.*

BY those ministers who had the advantage of hearing this admirable dis-

course, its publication will be esteemed no small benefit conferred upon the Christian ministry at large. Eloquent, exciting, instructive, discriminating, and admonitory, it seems to us that few can read it without considerable advantage. The affecting exhibition which it makes of a Christian minister's office, character, work, tempta-



tions, and responsibility, has compelled us to cry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" We feel it to be a solemn duty to recommend its thoughtful and repeated perusal to all who would "make proof of their ministry," convinced as we are, that the world has not yet seen what this divine institution is capable of effecting. We give the following passages:—

"It is an affecting thought, that we are surrounded, from Sabbath to Sabbath, with immortal men, many of whom have neither part nor lot in the Gospel which we preach; that their neglect of the great salvation is bringing upon them a burden of incalculable guilt; and that it is at our lips that they are to receive almost the only representations of the nature, the indispensable importance, and eternal worth of that salvation. Well we know that the Spirit of God operates by the instrumentality of the Gospel, and if that Gospel be imperfectly preached, it may be expected that the instrument will be inefficacious: we know that, as in the material world the last grain constitutes the full tale, and gives preponderance to the balance that was rolling doubtfully on its pivot; and that the last superadded impulse gives momentum to the machine, and puts its many wheels in motion; so in the persuasions and representations of the pulpit, the full amount of scripture argument must be brought to bear upon the judgment, and the full force of scripture motive to press upon the heart, or the wavering mind will be left in indecision, and the torpid nature will continue unmoved. It is a thrilling, dreadful thought, that there were minds vibrating between heaven and hell, and that through our want of skill, or want of diligence, or want of earnestness, we failed to exhibit the appropriate representations which, speaking after the manner of men, would have issued in holy decision; had but one more exhibition of some urgent scripture appeal been added, in the place of much that was irrelevant, we should have had to rejoice over another soul snatched from the burning. Oh, it is agonizing to think of such a soul perishing. It was not far from the kingdom of heaven; the slumber of its listlessness was at least disturbed; there was a critical moment, when the pastor might have lifted in his arms the wandering sheep, and placed it in the fold; but the juncture passed unimproved; through our indolence or unsympathy the appropriate instrument was not plied; and so aroused conscience became seared, deeper slumbers succeeded,

and eternal death was the consequence. Oh, it is dreadful to think of the death of such a lost one! He will estimate ministerial faithfulness by new rules; not merely the teaching of error, the heartlessness of formality, and the neglect of indolence, will appear unfaithful and cruel, but the unskilful application of evangelical remedies, the omission of a single motive, the feebleness of a single appeal, will seem a criminal negligence. When consequences of infinite moment are dependent, O how accurately, how sedulously, how anxiously, should the whole apparatus be adjusted, and how unremittingly and wisely should it be plied! Honesty of purpose will not compensate for ruin consequent on an unskilful use of our appropriate instrumentality."—pp. 24—26.

It is, in fine, the pastor's office and his privilege to mould believers for the skies. As objects of the Father's love, the precious purchase of atoning blood, the new-born subjects of the Spirit's agency, they are made heirs of eternal glory; but a course of discipline is to be passed, whereby they are to be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance prepared for them. To this gracious purpose, the whole economy of Providence is subservient; but the dispensations of Providence can only act upon the moral man by medium of his intelligence; the truth must be clearly and faithfully presented to his mind, to effect the desired result.

*Dialogues, Moral and Scientific, intended principally for Young Persons connected with Sunday Schools. In 2 vols. Mason, London.*

UPON the whole, a useful and interesting publication; although we do not think the arrangement or selection of topics altogether the happiest that could have been adopted; they are somewhat too miscellaneous and unconnected; the title, too, is perhaps somewhat too formal for the nature of the work.

*Thirteen Sermons on Matthew xi. 25. 30. Preached at Olney, Buckinghamshire, by Rev. John Newton. Religious Tract Society.*

*The Nun. Serley and Burnside, London: 1833. pp. 326.*

THIS is one of a class of books which we never particularly ad-

mired, and the utility of which we are much disposed to question. This religious tale is, however, as good as most, and contains a good deal in illustration of the practices and superstitions of the Romish Church.

*Manly Piety in its Spirit.* By Robert Philip, of Maberly Chapel. London: Ward and Co. 27, Paternoster Row

THIS is the second volume of Mr. Philip's Second Series of Experimental Guides; a series addressed immediately to the young, and its subject is well chosen and well timed:

Christian character is the fruit of divine grace, that it may be to the praise of the divine glory. Every regenerate man should be "by manifest declaration an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men." But in order to this, great attention must be paid to the *spirit* of religious character and profession. There may be an apparent conformity to the divine rule, in an unimpeachable integrity, a regular attention to the ordinances of worship, and a somewhat liberal support of the religious institutions of the age; but if it be not equally obvious that the heart is thoroughly imbued with divine love, and vigorously sustained by immortal hopes:—if there be reason to suspect that selfishness rather than love impels to action, or if there be an obvious tendency to despondency and gloom instead of a prevailing joy, "unspeakable, and full of glory," the effect of the profession is practically neutralized:—not only is religion not commended, it is discredited and even betrayed. Mr. Philip has evidently written under the full impression of this truth, and has done well in calling the attention of the *young* to this particular topic. Their position at this period is a very solemn and important one. Much depends on *them*, and much is expected from *them*. They will either do much good or much harm by their connexion with religion. The *spirit of piety* which has hitherto prevailed, is not sufficiently *manly* to meet the claims of this extraordinary juncture. The rising generation of Christians (so to speak) must be men of another spirit in religion than their predecessors, or the great moral march of the world must be greatly retarded.

They must act more decidedly on principle, and less on excitement; they must exhibit religion to the world under a more lovely and imposing, as well as a less equivocal aspect; and they should at once nerve themselves for the effort and the eminence to which they are called. This is decidedly one of the best books which could come into the hands of the youthful professor at the present crisis. It is calculated to excite serious consideration, to awaken important inquiry, to check rash presumption, and to stimulate to holy and active consistency. Mr. P. has divided his book into seven sections; and has spoken of *Manly Views of Divine Love; manly Impartiality in Repentance; manly Avowals of Immortal Hopes; manly Views and Avowals of Faith; manly Devotedness to the Divine Glory; manly Estimates of the Evil of Sin; and manly Glory in the Cross.*

It is altogether unnecessary to make extracts for the sake of showing the style in which Mr. P. writes. Suffice it to say, that this volume is in our opinion quite equal to any thing that has hitherto proceeded from his pen, and will, we doubt not, obtain, as we are sure it deserves, the same extensive circulation with those which have preceded it. We have been particularly pleased with both the sentiments and the style of the *third* of these essays:—on *Manly Avowals of Immortal Hopes*. It deserves the most serious attention of Christians of all ages and under all circumstances.

*The Church at Philippi; or, the Doctrines and Conduct of the Early Christians illustrated.* Intended to serve as an historical Commentary upon St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. By H. S. Baynes. Leslie, Great Queen Street. 1834.

THIS is an ingenious thought, and though there are some faults in the execution, the volume is, on the whole, interesting.

*Theory of Pneumatology, in Reply to the Question, What ought to be Believed or Disbelieved concerning Presentiments, Visions, Apparitions, according to Nature, to Reason, and Scripture.* By Dr. Johann Heinrich Young Stilling. Translated from the German, with copious Notes by Samuel Jackson. London: Longman & Co. 1834.

*A Companion to the Closet; or the Way to keep the Heart right with God. By John Jefferson. London: Ward and Co.*

WHEN the heart of a Christian is not "right with God," it is right with nothing. Even the things which have divided or diverted it from God are not really enjoyed, however much they may be pursued. Neither gain nor gaiety, even when they have estranged the heart farthest from "the Fountain of living waters," can long keep down the bitter cry, "Oh! that it were with me as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone upon me." That candle does not shine upon the soul, when it begins to hew out to itself "cisterns" of secular or sensual pleasure. The soul is but ill at ease, feels out of its element, even before it makes the experimental and painful discovery, that "they can hold no water." It has often a cutting sense of their vanity, before they involve it in "vexation of spirit."

"I was not made for earth or sin,  
Nor can I live on things so vile."  
is a reflection which haunts the man who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, even when he is most tempted by the things of time and sense.

Neither the importance, nor the necessity of keeping the heart right with God, is, however, soon learnt. In general, it is a lesson taught by the sad consequences of letting the heart go wrong with God. Perhaps nothing else could teach it effectually. Much of it might, however, be acquired at a cheaper rate than it usually is. We must, indeed, learn by experience; but "bitter experience" need not be so often our teacher, on this subject.

We know somewhat of this stern teacher: and on comparing his lessons with those taught by Mr. Jefferson, in this "way of keeping the heart right with God," we can neither help seeing nor confessing, that had such a book been the companion of our closet, when we were brought to our "right mind" by conversion, we might have escaped not a few errors and chastisements.

This may be an unusual style of reviewing; but as the author has adapted his book to actual experience, we choose to review it experimentally; and thus to engage both the attention

and confidence of those who "know the plagues of their own hearts," and feel the need of an antidote. And, what Christian does not? Or, if any of our young friends do not yet suspect the treachery of their own hearts, to them, as much as to all, who know and fear it, we commend this Companion to the Closet. It is equally adapted to prevent and remedy the evils of a heart "not right with God."

Our readers know Mr. Jefferson as a Theologian, from his Treatise on the Official Glory of the Son of God; a work that is a positive addition to the stock of our standard divinity. It is, however, so purely theological, that we are glad to meet the author in his devotional and experimental character as a writer. He has not disappointed us. With equal vigour, there is, as might be expected, more vivacity in this little work. Dealing with hearts, has drawn forth his own heart.

We regret much that our limits prevent us from extracting the chapter entitled, "*The Saviour's Heart a pattern for ours.*" It is equally milk for babes, and strong meat for fathers and mothers in Israel, on this subject. But we can only give the contents of the work: "The Heart which is right with God; Pre-requisites for keeping the Heart right; Keeping the Heart right, the chief end of Closet duties; Keeping the Heart right in Prayer; in Thanksgiving; in Meditation; in Self-examination; in reading the Bible; in Public Worship; at the Lord's Table; in the World; in Religious Efforts of Zeal; under Temptation; in Affliction, &c." Ward and Co. have brought out this little work in a style worthy of its devotional character.

*Doctrines according to Godliness; or, a Confession of Faith, confirmed by the Scriptures of unerring Truth. To which are appended, the united Testimonies of ancient and modern eminent Divines of different Sects of the Catholic, or Universal Church of Christ. By Henry Heap. 12mo. pp. 316. London: Hamilton and Co.*

This is a valuable collection of extracts from the best theologians, on the most important doctrines of Christianity.

*The Ultimate Object of the Evangelical Dissenters avowed and advocated. A Sermon preached at the King's Weigh House, London. By T. Binney. 8vo. pp. 44. Jackson and Walford.*

As there are not a few worthy persons who believe that the Dissenters are engaged in a dark plot that must end in a direful explosion, which will overthrow alike the altar and the throne, a Sermon that avows "the ultimate object" of these political dissenters, and reveals their mysterious secret, cannot fail to be most acceptable just now, and the wonder is, how the author could venture not only to let it out, but to advocate it too!

It is however published, and a Cambridge advocate of the *Exclusive Power of an episcopally ordained Clergy* has given the public his opinion of it—which we will quote for the information of our readers. "It is a noble address. It breathes the sublime and heavenly spirit of universal love which influenced the primitive church."—"This witness is true,"—but when the same writer thinks that Mr. Binney "shows that he is as superior to the reckless party with whom he is associated, as is the stately forest tree to the noxious and poisonous weeds which are nourished by its shadow:" we must assure him that whatever intellectual superiority Mr. B. may possess over any of his brethren, he is only a faithful representative and expositor of the sentiments they generally entertain; and to prove this, we beg leave to refer that gentleman or any of his clerical brethren to the *Primary Address of the Congregational Union* adopted at their last assembly.

To this beautiful and impressive discourse on Christian unity, Mr. Binney has added an appendix that deserves the special notice of those who, with little knowledge of his character and spirit, have maligned him.

*Selections from the Conversations and Unpublished Writings of Rev. E. Payson, D. D. Edinburgh, Waugh and Innes. 1834. 24mo.*

DR. PAYSON is a well-known author, and this is a useful little selection from his writings.

*Easton Hall. A Tale. By J. A. Boddy. 8vo, pp. 183. Powell.*

*The Gospel of the Old Testament: an Explanation of the Types and Figures by which Christ was exhibited under the Legal Dispensation. Re-written from the original Work of Samuel Mather. By the Author of "The Listener." "Christ our Example." 2 Vols. 12mo. Seeley and Burnside.*

THIS is a judicious reprint and abridgment of the larger work of the old Puritan Divine. Mather's work is generally admitted to be one of the best, if not the very best, on the subject of the types. Its style, however, was very repulsive.

*Counsels to the Aged; or a Companion for the Evening of Life. By John Morison, D. D. Westley and Davis. 24mo., pp. 141.*

A COMPANION to the useful little work, by the same author, entitled, "Counsels to a Newly-wedded Pair," &c.

*Literary Recreations, or Scenes from Real Life. By the Rev. J. Young, Author of Scripture Balances, &c. 24mo. pp. 323. Whittaker.*

*The Church of Christ in her Offices, Gifts, and Privileges, taken solely from the Word of God. 1834. Edinburgh, Oliphant and Son. 12mo. pp. 216.*

A USEFUL little manual for enquirers on the subject of church government.

## LITERARY INTELLIGENCE

### WORKS AT PRESS, OR IN PROGRESS.

The Rev. B. Brook has issued proposals for publishing by subscription, an improved edition of "The Lives of the most celebrated Puritan Divines," in two large volumes, octavo. This, we understand, is a work of great cost and labour, and of so common interest.

The "Corner Stone," by Jacob Abbott. Revised and corrected, with an Introductory Essay, by Rev. Robert Philip.

Female Biography of the New Testament, by Timpon.

Evening Readings, by Sigourney.

A Companion for the Closet, by the Rev. J. Jefferson.

Common Scenes Improved, by the Rev. James Smith. Enlarged.

Praise and Blame, one vol. 18mo. by the Author of "Art in Nature."

By the same Author, The Treasures of the Earth, one vol. 18mo.

The Value of Time, by the Author of "Little Lessons for Little Learners," one vol. 18mo.

Modern Fanaticism Unveiled. 2d Edition, one vol. 18mo.

## TRANSACTIONS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL DISSENTERS.

THEOLOGICAL ACADEMY AT GLASGOW,  
IN CONNEXION WITH THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF SCOTLAND.

A public meeting of the friends of this Institution, was held in Albany Street Chapel, Edinburgh, on Wednesday evening, May the 7th, Mr. Watson, of Musselburgh, in the chair. After praise and prayer, the Report was read by Mr. Cullen, of Leith, the Secretary. It appears, that besides the ten regular students admitted by the Committee of Management, and partly supported from the funds, there have been at the Academy during last session, several missionary students connected with the London Missionary Society, besides others from England or belonging to Glasgow, who are attending the University. Five are about to leave the Academy at the close of this term, having finished their course of study; but the Committee had received many applications for admission, and had reason to hope that the class next session would at least be as numerous as the last. There were many churches and stations requiring supply, and double the number of labourers thus brought on the field, might be usefully employed at the present time. The Committee considered it necessary to defray the expenses attending the education of such young men as require support, that they may exercise control in the selection of those whom they bring forward to the ministry, and in regulating the course of their studies. Having the valued services of gratuitous tutors, they can do much at little expense, to afford the means of a literary and theological education to such as are considered worthy by the churches. The whole expenditure for last year amounted to about £270, and the income, from subscriptions, collections, and a legacy by the late Mrs. Laing, of Dundee, to £360.

The Rev. John Campbell, of the Tabernacle, London, moved that the report be received, printed, and circulated among the churches. He said the  
N.S. NO. 115.

object of the institution was, to secure the blessing of a converted ministry, and to avoid the greatest curse that could befall the church—an ungodly ministry; and the means that were employed were well calculated to promote this end; the greatest attention was paid to the character of those who were received into the Academy, both as to piety, and the possession of those gifts which were likely to render them useful ministers of the New Testament. When a young man desired to be admitted, he first mentioned this to his pastor, who, after satisfying himself as to his qualifications, mentioned him to the church of which he was a member; and he was not proposed to the Committee unless the church gave him a unanimous recommendation—the Committee then sent him a number of questions, from his answers to which, they were able to obtain, as it were, a bird's-eye view of his mind. If they were satisfied with him, they put him under the care of the tutors, who kept him under the closest inspection, so that it was almost impossible for any one to deceive them as to his real character. From the manner in which the studies of the young men were regulated, their character must be improved, as well as their qualifications for the ministry matured, so that the Academy must prove a great blessing to them, as well as to the churches among which they were to labour. He concluded by moving the resolution.

Andrew Muir, Esq. of Greenock, seconded the resolution. He said he could bear testimony to the beneficial effects of the Academy, and to the excellent character of the students. He had often had the pleasure of receiving them into his house, and was greatly delighted with their pious conversation, and the proofs they gave of proficiency in their studies. He concluded by urging upon the meeting the claims of the institution.

The Rev. Mr. Russell, of Dundee, moved the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Ewing and Dr. Wardlaw, the tu-  
3 K



tors in the Academy, for their gratuitous services for twenty-two years, and the great care and attention they paid to all its interests. He said it was generally considered that votes of thanks were mere matters of form; but in the present case it was something more; he believed that every member of the churches with which the Academy was connected, felt the obligation they were under to the tutors. They had been instrumental in training up many for the work of the ministry, both at home and abroad; and those who considered the advantages conferred upon the church by an educated ministry, must be deeply sensible of their obligation to those who were so highly instrumental in providing for them such a blessing. He said it was the duty of every Christian to endeavour to enlighten his fellow-men in the doctrines of the gospel, according to his own measure of light, or the opportunities he might have of imparting it; but there was a particular class of men whose sole duty it was to do so by the Christian ministry; the apostle distinguished between the teacher and the taught, and thus sanctioned the separation of particular persons for this purpose. And this was particularly necessary in the present day. A conflict was begun between light and darkness, between truth and error, which would not terminate until the cry was heard—the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. It was necessary that they should employ all the means which they possessed to support the cause of truth in this conflict.

After several other observations, Mr. B. concluded by moving thanks to the tutors.

The Rev. Mr. Burnett, of Camberwell, seconded the motion of thanks to Mr. Ewing and Dr. Wardlaw. He said, the presence of the gentlemen who were the objects of this motion, prevented him from saying what he would have been otherwise disposed to say on the subject. The importance of these institutions was becoming daily more apparent, and their numbers were constantly increasing. In London alone they could number four, in Yorkshire there were three, and con-

siderable numbers in other parts of England; and the Principality of Wales had also its proportion. An allusion had been made to the present time, and the times were certainly big with great events. God was shaking all nations; the despots of Europe were trembling upon their thrones, and changes of the greatest importance were manifestly approaching with great rapidity. When they considered the efforts that infidelity was making to overthrow the bulwarks of Zion, they must be satisfied as to the importance of having an educated and an enlightened ministry to oppose such efforts. The geologist had ransacked every part of nature for means to oppose the gospel. All had been brought into requisition in this unholy strife. He would allow the infidel to occupy the field, and to choose his weapons. He would allow the universe to be the field, and the weapons all things; but he would meet him upon this field, and contend with him with these weapons, and, by the assistance of Divine Grace, he would bring him under captivity to the obedience of Christ; an educated and intelligent ministry was absolutely necessary for this purpose.

The Chairman now, in a neat, very affectionate, and impressive manner, offered the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Ewing and Dr. Wardlaw, who both, in short but appropriate speeches, acknowledged the honour which had been done them by the meeting, and declared their willingness to continue their services to the churches in this manner as long as God might be pleased to give them health and strength for the performance of their important duties.

After praise and prayer, the meeting, which was very large for the occasion, dispersed, and a collection was made, as they retired, for the funds of the Academy.

#### RESOLUTIONS OF THE NORTH RIDING INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION.

At the half-yearly Meeting of the North Riding Association of Independent Ministers and Congregations, held at Pickering, June 11th, 1834, it was unanimously resolved—

1. That this Meeting deeply regrets the unsatisfactory nature of the measure which Lord Althorp intends to bring forward in the House of Commons for the abolition of Church Rates, and most decidedly protests against it; first, because it proposes to tax the whole United Kingdom for the support of the richest English sect. Secondly, because the present ecclesiastical property is amply sufficient, and fairly applicable to the object intended. Thirdly, because it deprives the Dissenters of a controul over parochial expenditure, which they at present possess. And, lastly, because it perpetuates those unjust distinctions between Protestant sects which retard their union.

2. That this Meeting, though deeply convinced of the necessity of a different appropriation of a large portion of the property now possessed or claimed by the Protestant Episcopal Church of Ireland, and that in any change which may take place, education, on an unsectarian basis, has the first claim to attention, would strongly deprecate the application of any part of it to the support of the Roman Catholic religion, in any way whatever.

#### OPENING OF THE NEW KING'S WEIGH-HOUSE, FISH-STREET-HILL, LONDON.

This chapel was opened for worship on the 28th of May. The Rev. T. Binney, minister of the place, commenced the services in the morning by reading appropriate passages of scripture, solemnly dedicating the structure to God, and invoking His blessing upon it. The Rev. J. A. James preached from Acts xiv. 7. "*There they preached the gospel.*" The Rev. Dr. Henderson concluded with prayer. In the evening the Rev. Dr. Smith commenced by reading the Scriptures and prayer. The Rev. John Clayton, jun. preached from 1 Sam. iv. 13. "*His heart trembled for the ark of God.*" The Rev. R. Ainsley, of Lavenham, Suffolk, concluded the services of the day. The chapel is larger, more commodious, and more conveniently situated than that which the congregation have left. It seats a thousand adults, and three hundred children. Two hundred free sittings are reserved

for the poor. As a building, it was much admired for being remarkably chaste in its appearance, and for presenting such a combination of simplicity and elegance as is so desirable in places of worship.

#### OPENING OF A NEW MEETING-HOUSE AT HINTON, NEAR CHRISTCHURCH, HANTS.

On the 20th of May, at Hinton, in the parish of Christchurch, Hants, was opened a new and elegant meeting-house, of the Independent denomination. This place of worship is in connection with the Protestant Dissenters at Christchurch.

Thomas Hall, Esq. gave more than £400 towards its erection, as part of the money which his ever to be lamented brother, Master Jesse Hall, left for religious and benevolent purposes. The remaining part of the expense was defrayed by the Independent church in Christchurch. There is a neat cottage belonging to the meeting-house, and ample ground for a garden and place of interment. A Sunday School of one hundred scholars is regularly taught, and already there is a Day School of about forty. In the morning of the opening the Rev. Mr. Hopkins, of Ripley, read suitable portions of Scripture, and gave a short but appropriate address, on the views which Dissenters entertained as to opening places of worship, and offered up a prayer, after which the Rev. D. Gunn preached.

In the evening the Rev. D. Gunn prayed, and the Rev. Mr. Waldo, of Throop, preached. The congregations were so large, both morning and evening, that many could not get within the walls.

The ground, which is a freehold, was given by a wealthy and respectable landowner in the neighbourhood, who, till of late, never worshipped among Protestant Dissenters. On the day of opening, the same gentleman entertained nearly thirty ladies and gentlemen at his table. As there is no inn near the place, a dinner was provided for persons who came from a distance, in a large barn, when nearly one hundred sat down and were amply supplied; after which they retired to

the meeting-house, where a prayer-meeting was held.

William Rowlett, Esq. a gentleman who has for some time resided in the neighbourhood of Christchurch, presented the Dissenters of Christchurch with four hundred guineas, for the erection of an Infants' School, and cottage for the mistress. This is but one evidence out of many, which the same individual has given of the liberality of his principles and the benevolence of his disposition. The school has been open for some time, and nearly eighty children are in attendance, and who are taught by a mistress and an assistant. The building is near the site where the girls' school is, and the boys' school also, in each of which there are more than one hundred scholars. Thus there are, at least, three hundred young persons who receive, in the small town of Christchurch, the elements of a good and solid education, under the superintendence and at the expense of the Protestant Independents. So much for the voluntary system, even in a small town.

#### ORDINATIONS, SETTLEMENTS, &c.

The Rev. John Bunter having for several years sustained the pastoral care of the church and congregation at Finchingfield, Essex, in a most efficient and affectionate manner, was called to resign his interesting charge, in consequence of ill health. This painful separation left the people for a time as "sheep without a shepherd;" when the Rev. Robert Ferguson (late of Baddington, N. B.) was introduced, and having supplied the pulpit acceptably for several weeks, received an *unanimous invitation* to accept the pastoral office. On Thursday, April 24th, a public designation took place, when the Rev. P. Sibree commenced the service by reading the Scriptures and prayer; the Rev. Luke Forster proposed the usual questions to the church and minister, and offered the designation prayer; the Rev. Dr. Henderson, of Highbury College, delivered an eloquent and impressive charge to the minister. The Rev. T. Craig, of Bocking preached a highly appropriate and affectionate sermon to the people;

and the Rev. R. Frost concluded with prayer.

This important and solemn service was attended by a numerous company of pastors, and a very large and respectable congregation. After which, nearly seventy gentlemen dined together, when several interesting and animated addresses were delivered, and the Rev. R. Ferguson received the kind congratulations of his friends.

The solemn services of the day will long be remembered with satisfaction and delight by the church and congregation. And it is earnestly hoped that the Great Head of the Church will continue to crown the union which has taken place with his peculiar favour and special benediction.

On Wednesday, June 4th, 1834, the Rev. J. Fitt was ordained to the pastoral office over the Independent church and congregation assembling at Ealing, Middlesex. The service was commenced with reading the Scriptures and prayer, by the Rev. T. Uppadine, of Hammersmith. The introductory discourse was delivered by the Rev. W. Spencer, of Holloway, who also proposed the usual questions. The Rev. Professor Vaughan, of Kensington, offered the ordination prayer. The Rev. Dr. Morison, of Brompton, delivered a most suitable charge to the minister; and the Rev. Thomas Jackson, of Stockwell, preached to the people in the evening, and concluded by prayer.

June 17, the Rev. James Gregory, late Student at the Western Academy, Exeter, was ordained to the pastoral office over the church assembling in Kipping Chapel, Thornton, near Bradford. The Rev. John Ely, of Leeds, gave the introductory discourse and asked the usual questions; the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, of Leeds, offered the ordination prayer, with imposition of hands; the Rev. W. Jones, of Bolton-le-Moors, addressed the charge to the minister from 2 Tim. ii. 15. In the evening the Rev. Joseph Hague, of Darwen, preached to the church and congregation from 2 Cor. i. 11, first clause. Rev. Messrs. Hulton, White, and Stringer engaged in the devotional services of the day. The morning was extremely tempestuous, yet the

attendance was very numerous, and the services highly instructive and impressive.

There had not been an ordination at Kipping since the settlement of Mr. Cockin, fifty-seven years ago. A new chapel had then recently been erected; during the ministry of his successor, Mr. Calvert, the chapel was enlarged. Whilst Mr. Pool held the pastorate at this place, the chapel was enlarged again, which is now sixty-

eight feet by forty-eight within. Mr. Gregory enters upon his stated ministerial labours with the most cheering prospects of success.

#### NOTICE.

The forty-first annual meeting of the Kent Association of Congregational Ministers and Churches will, (D.V.) be held at the Rev. Edmund Jinkings' Chapel, Maidstone, on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 8th and 9th.

### MISCELLANEOUS INTELLIGENCE.

#### NARRATIVE OF THE STATE OF RELIGION IN THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF MASSACHUSETTS, U.S. FOR 1833.

In the reports which have been received from our churches, there is much to awaken joy and gratitude in the hearts of Christians; there is much to enkindle their hope, and establish their confidence in the promises of God; and there is much to rebuke their self-confidence and prostrate them in deep humility at the foot of the cross.

Revivals of religion have not been so extensive and powerful, within our limits, the past year, as in the years immediately preceding. Yet we are not left wholly without evidence that God has remembered his heritage, and has been gathering in his chosen. Individual churches, in different sections of the state, have been greatly blessed; and some are still enjoying the precious influences of the divine Spirit.

Several new churches have, during the year, sprung into being, erected houses of worship, and planted the institutions of the gospel in the midst of heresy and sin. Our feeble churches, that had come out of great tribulation, have been made strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. They are among the most favoured and beautiful daughters of Zion. Their history teaches us, that it is better to trust in God than to put confidence in princes. Our older churches have many of them received large accessions; and they are reaping the glorious fruits of the mighty power of God, which has so recently scattered its blessings over the land.

The reports of our Associations assure us, that where there has been no special revival, and no considerable additions to the church, there has still been a general attendance on the means of grace. The truth has been heard, and the consciences of the wicked have testified, that it was the truth of God. Peace, har-

mony, and fellowship exist among the churches of the Redeemer. The spirit of controversy and distrust, if it was ever beginning to be cherished, is fast giving place to the spirit of affection, and confidence, and mutual co-operation. Ministers are seeing eye to eye; or they are forgetting their minor differences, to encourage and support each other in the great work which God has given them to do. The members of our churches are feeling a stronger and stronger attachment to the faith once delivered to the saints; and they are beginning to recognize something of their amazing obligations to go forth, in the strength of the Lord, to take possession of the globe.

It is a pleasing evidence of the genuineness of that work of grace which has enlarged our churches, that the spirit which has been kindled up in them, is the spirit of Missions. Never did the disciples of Christ, in our connection, feel more deeply than they do at present, that they live not for themselves. Foreign Missions, Home-Missions, the education of young men for the ministry, and other kindred departments of benevolent enterprise, are objects dear to their hearts. And these objects have been sustained in the past year, with a liberality, a cheerfulness, and a zeal, which call for devout ascriptions of praise, and which constitute a bright bow of promise for the future. Our churches are taking up the work of a world's salvation, with so much energy, and so much system, that they appear determined never to relinquish it, and never to grow weary until the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. But we hope they will feel that their work is only begun,—that they have yet made no sacrifices,—that they have not yet testified their love for dying men, as did he, who gave his blood to redeem them.

The Sabbath Schools connected with our congregations have never been in a more flourishing state, than they are at present. It is no longer the universal impression, that Sabbath Schools are designed solely for children. Many of them already include the older part of the youth, fathers and mothers of middle life, and even men who have passed their three-score years and ten. God grant that it may soon be acknowledged by every member of our churches, and by every member of our congregations, that there is no one too old, or too wise, or too busy, to study the word of God, or to be educated in the sanctuary, and on the Sabbath, for the kingdom of heaven.

The Temperance Reformation has made rapid advances. In some Associations, the number of pledges has during the year been more than doubled. In others, there is not an individual licensed to sell strong drink, and in most, if not all, the number of licenses has been greatly diminished. Many of our churches have become temperance churches. They admit none to their fellowship who do not avow the principle of total abstinence from both the consumption and the traffic. And some of them have, by special vote, made the traffic in every form a disciplinable offence. Churches that are yet slumbering over a subject of such awful moment, must be aroused. Every church, as she regards the honour of her God and King, must take a decided stand. Every professing Christian must be called upon to answer the question, as in the light of the judgment, whether he can drink ardent spirit, or make it, or sell it, to the glory of God; whether he can, in any way, countenance those who use it, or deal in it, and not be a partaker of other men's sins; whether he can know how to do good, in this cause, by the influence of his name and his example, and refuse to do it, and have evidence that he is a child of God.

Our Colleges continue to enjoy the smiles of heaven, and are training up their hundreds of young men for the ministry of reconciliation. In our Theological Seminary there yet lives and breathes the spirit of Mills, and Fisk, and Parsons, securing for it the affection and the confidence of the churches, and inspiring high hope in behalf of a perishing world.

The reports of Foreign Ecclesiastical bodies, in correspondence with this, are of such a character as to assure us that our hopes, our interests, our responsibilities are one; that we have a common faith, and a common Father; that we are members of the same church, and hope to inhabit the same house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church speak of a partial suspension of that divine influence, with which they have for years been blessed. More than two-thirds of their Presbyteries, however, have enjoyed, to a greater or less extent, the effusions of the Holy Ghost. The dark cloud which seemed to be gathering over them, has been scattered away; their councils have been harmonious and peaceful, and that spirit, which seeks to bring all the perishing children of men into the great family of God, seems to be fast swallowing up every other interest.

About three thousand have been added to the churches in Connecticut, during the past year. These churches are enjoying an unusual degree of peace and external prosperity. Though the special influences of the divine Spirit have been in a measure withheld, yet there are not a few places that are enjoying manifest tokens of God's favour. In the Theological Seminary connected with Yale College, there exists a more than ordinary interest in the subject of Foreign Missions; and an unusual number of its members have consecrated themselves to the work of the ministry among the heathen.

The churches in Vermont are united in sentiment, in feeling, and in benevolent enterprise. They are carrying forward, with energy and success, the Sabbath School cause, the Temperance reformation, and the great work of evangelizing a world.

The churches in New Hampshire are enjoying the presence of God. If his presence is less perceptible than formerly, in the awakening and conversion of sinners, it is distinctly seen in his causing his covenant people to abound in every good work. Every Congregational Minister in the State belongs to a Temperance Society; and about seven-eighths of all the members of the churches, are in favour of the doctrine of total abstinence.

With the churches in Maine, the past year has not been distinguished as a year of the right hand of the Most High. Yet, in several of the churches connected with the General Conference, there have been indications of the special presence of God. The Theological Seminary at Bangor, is in a more prosperous condition than ever before since its foundation; and it promises to perform a most important service, for our church and our land, in supplying the Great Valley of the East with a preached gospel.

The churches connected with the Evangelical Consociation of Rhode Island, are enjoying distinguished prosperity. And



their example, in deeds of charity, and in efforts to benefit the rising generation, is worthy of universal imitation.

In thus reviewing the dealings of God with us, the past year, we perceive that he has, notwithstanding our ingratitude, our inactivity, and our unbelief, poured down upon us, infinitely beyond what we have deserved, the blessings of his grace. He has done it for his name's sake, and for his own glory. To him belongs praise; but to us belong shame and confusion of face, because we have departed from the Lord our God.

While we rejoice in the blessings bestowed upon our churches, we have to lament over the worldliness and stupidity which bind them to the earth. The tidings from almost every Association are, that the influences of the divine Spirit, have been, in a great measure withdrawn. In many places, where, but a few months since, the trophies of redeeming mercy were multiplied as the drops of the morning, now a sinner is now heard inquiring the way of life,—no breath breathes upon the slain,—no shaking is heard among the bones, and there is not a single resurrection to immortal life. And why is the pall of death thus settling down and shutting in, upon nearly every point of our horizon? Is the Lord's arm shortened that it cannot save? Is his ear heavy that he cannot hear? Are we *delivered* to suffer these things? And shall we fold up our hands and wait, in inaction and unbelief, for God's own appointed time of reviving us again to return? Or shall we remember whence we are fallen, and repent, and do our first works,—turn unto God with our whole heart, and give him no rest, till he turn the parched ground into pools of living water?

We have spoken of our churches as enjoying peace and external prosperity. But it may be questioned, whether a season of the partial suspension of divine influence, is ever a season of prosperity.

Is it not rather a season of chastisement, a day of rebuke, for the sins which God's own children have committed against him? Brethren, there is an awful responsibility resting upon us, at this hour. We are called upon by the indications of a frowning providence, by the multitudes that are perishing around us, and by the judgment throne, before which we shall shortly stand, to answer for abused mercies,—we are called upon to prostrate ourselves, in the deepest humiliation, at the foot of the cross, and cry, God be merciful to us sinners. Hear, O Lord, the prayer of thy servants, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate. O Lord, hearken, and do and defer not, for thine own sake, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

#### STATE OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, UNITED STATES.

The systematic attempts that are made in this country to depreciate, for the mere purposes of party, the state of religion in America, renders it the imperative duty of those who conduct the religious periodicals of Great Britain, that are devoted to the advocacy of voluntary church principles, to supply the public with statements drawn from documents published in America. Such papers are undoubtedly the best authorities, for in that country the vigilance of the public mind would promptly detect and expose exaggerated statements, should the attempt be made to obtrude them upon public notice.

The report of the General Association of Connecticut for 1833 has been forwarded to us, and we have therefore reduced their statistical tables, as we did those of the General Association of Massachusetts, in our May number, that our readers at a glance may learn the average state of things in those 233 associated Churches.

Name of Association.	No. of Churches.	No. of Ministers.	No. of Members.	Members received, 1833.	Removed.	Expulsion.
Hartford, North ..	24	23	4147	415	142	1
Hartford, South ..	17	17	2817	163	111	8
New Haven, West ..	23	16	2024	411	180	5
New Haven, East ..	16	16	1475	103	63	0
New London ..	26	23	2914	176	118	5
Fairfield, West ..	19	18	2416	233	150	3
Fairfield, East ..	13	13	2034	153	63	6
Windham ..	24	20	3001	756	87	6
Litchfield, North ..	22	18	1863	64	63	0
Litchfield, South ..	17	13	1299	916	52	1
Middlesex ..	15	14	2454	78	85	4
Tolland ..	17	17	2355	238	90	5
<b>17 Associations</b> ..	<b>233</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>28,799</b>	<b>3003</b>	<b>1204</b>	<b>44</b>

The returns for these Associations are very incomplete.

From which it appears, 1st. That these 233 churches average rather more than 123 members each, or a total of 28,799 communicants.

2dly. That these 233 churches increased, during the year, without allowing for defective returns, more than twelve each, or 3003 in the General Association.

3dly. That these 233 churches lost by deaths, removals, and expulsion, only 5 each, during the year, or a total of 1204 throughout the Association.

4thly. That these 233 churches lost by expulsion but 44 members during the year, which is as one case of excommunication to each church in about five years and a quarter.

In our next we shall insert the official Report "on the State of Religion," drawn up by order of the Connecticut General Association, as we have given, in another page, the Report of the Association of Massachusetts on the same subject.

#### FORMATION OF A WELSH ECCLESIASTICAL KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY.

One of our Correspondents remarks: "The alliance of Church and State is now the 'Question of Questions' in Wales. Last summer some forward friends of the Church proposed several prizes for the best Essays on the 'Evils of Dissent.' By Dissenters, this challenge was looked upon as being extremely unseasonable, and was instantly met by the publication of several letters on the 'Evils of Church Establishments.' The prize compositions of our opponents were to make their appearance in September; the time was afterwards postponed to Christmas; but their Essays have not yet appeared. Should they be published, it is likely we shall have more work. Their 'movement,' however, led to the formation of a Welsh Ecclesiastical Knowledge Society; and at the request of its Committee, I have written an Essay on the subject, which they have just published."

#### COMPARATIVE NUMBERS OF CHURCHMEN IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF WALES.

The following returns from twenty-four Parishes in the counties of Mont-

gomery and Merioneth may perhaps be taken as a pretty fair specimen of the comparative number of Dissenters and Churchmen in the Principality of Wales. The first column will give the average number of Church hearers, and the second the average number of Dissenting hearers.

Parish.	Ch. Hear.	Dis. Hear.
Tywyn .. ..	150	1600
Mallwyd .. ..	46	652
Llanymowddwy .. ..	18	237
Dolgellau .. ..	550	2040
Llanellud .. ..	60	180
Llanfachreth .. ..	350	680
Llanuwchllyn .. ..	40	650
Llanfawr .. ..	40	590
Llanycil .. ..	250	1450
Llandderfel .. ..	50	900
Llandrillo .. ..	40	450
Myfod .. ..	100	1450
Llanfyllin .. ..	200	850
Llanfihangel .. ..	150	360
Llanerfil .. ..	90	360
Llangyniew .. ..	60	200
Llanfair .. ..	80	1860
Manafon .. ..	60	200
Berriew .. ..	200	700
Newtown .. ..	310	2500
Aberhovep .. ..	70	500
Llanidloes .. ..	250	2850
Machynlleth .. ..	150	1800
Llanbrynmair .. ..	35	1450
Total .. ..	3339	24,249

Thus giving an aggregate majority of more than seven to one in favour of Dissent. In the above 24 parishes, the Dissenters have 120 places of worship; and, reckoning according to this proportion, the 910 parishes of Wales would contain no less than 4550 Dissenting Chapels. Should any members of the Establishment be wishful of obtaining a complete Table of the religious Statistics of Wales, Dissenters would be ready to give them every assistance in their power, well knowing that the result would at once expose the injustice of their being any longer deprived of those sacred rights which they are now so anxious to enjoy.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND MINOR CORRESPONDENCE.

Communications have been received from Rev. Messrs. D. Gunn—T. Milner, M.A.—J. Jefferson—R. Richings—H. Wilkes, M.A.—J. Barker, M.A.—R. Ferguson—W. Blackburn—R. Philip—T. Binney—Thomas Hulton—H. J. Rooke—W. Reeve—C. Williams—G. B. Kidd.

Also from Messrs. P. Smith—E. Wright—and J. Pinkerton.

We would recommend "A Subscriber," to consult Dr. Wardlaw's Lectures on the Secular Controversy. We fear that his suspicions respecting Job Orton are too well founded. Mr. Wright's letter will be forwarded to the author of the Essays.